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TUDOR TREATISES

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TUDOR TREATISES

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PREFACE

The treatises here presented relate directly or indirectly to the Reformation. In Sir Francis Bigod we observe the type of mind which acclaimed the Protestant solution; in Robert Parkyn, a natural Catholic, who opposed to the incoming tide the crumbling barriers of the old contemplative tradition; in Michael Sherbrook an Elizabethan romanticiser of the Middle Ages and a pessimist concerning the apparent social results of the Reformation.

Having worked out the editorial problems some years ago, I have inevitably, in the act of publication, entertained some misgivings and after-thoughts. Bigod has no known Wycliffite connections, yet is it pure coincidence that, of all his predecessors, Wyclif most precisely foreshadows his main thesis? More important, I have asked myself whether Parkyn's *Brief Rule* may not turn out to be a copy, version, or translation of some little-known piece by another author. The possibility cannot lightly be dismissed, and I should be the last to boast comprehensive coverage of this immense field. Yet unless and until we locate an original, the treatise must be given to Parkyn. It contains nothing strikingly beyond his powers or foreign to his style; it reflects a field of study in which his proficiency is certain. Moreover, when elsewhere he copies other men's works, he provides clear attributions.

Regarding Michael Sherbrook, a few further references have emerged from the York diocesan records. He appears (A.B. 50) as curate of Scrooby in 1562, five years before becoming rector of Wickersley. There are also brief references to him at Wickersley in 1567 (H.C. A.B. 5), in 1579 (A.B. 24) and in 1583 (A.B. 61), but they seem to shed no significant light upon his opinions. I have failed to discover any fresh references to a *Cuthbert* Sherbrook, or indeed to any person who might challenge Michael's authorship of the treatise here printed.

I wish to record thanks to Professor David Knowles for kindly encouragement with this project; to the General Editor, Mrs. M. J. Stanley Price, and to the Librarian of Aberdeen University, who sent the Parkyn manuscript on extended loan to the Hull University Library. To the West Yorkshire Printing Company I am deeply indebted for the most skilful and conscientious execution of a complex task.

A. G. D.

Wynyates, Cottingham.
July, 1960.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Chron. Butley Priory</i>	<i>The Register or Chronicle of Butley Priory</i> , ed. A. G. Dickens.
<i>E.E.T.S.</i>	<i>Early English Text Society.</i>
<i>E.H.R.</i>	<i>English Historical Review.</i>
Foxe	J. Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> , ed. S. R. Cattley.
Horstman	<i>Yorkshire Writers</i> , ed. C. Horstman.
<i>Imitatio</i>	T. à Kempis, <i>Imitatio Christi.</i>
<i>L. & P.</i>	<i>Letters and Papers of Henry VIII</i> , ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie.
<i>Lollards and Protestants</i>	A. G. Dickens, <i>Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558</i> (1959).
<i>N.E.D.</i>	<i>New English Dictionary (The Oxford English Dictionary).</i>
Peryn	W. Peryn, <i>Spiritual Exercises</i> , ed. C. Kirchberger.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
<i>Scale</i>	W. Hilton, <i>The Scale of Perfection</i> , ed. E. Underhill.
<i>S.T.C.</i>	<i>Short Title Catalogue</i> , ed. A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave.
<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus</i>	<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus</i> , ed. J. Caley and J. Hunter.
<i>Y.A.J.</i>	<i>Yorkshire Archaeological Journal.</i>
<i>Y.A.S.Rec.Ser.</i>	<i>Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series.</i>

INTRODUCTION

I

Alone of our three treatises, the first is taken from a printed book, yet since only two copies are known to have survived,¹ and since an exceptional interest attaches to the author and his views, a reprint would seem overdue. Sir Francis Bigod's *A Treatise concernyng Impropriations of Benefices* is a duodecimo volume of 47 pages, published without date by the London printer Thomas Godfray. In the text tributes are paid both to the Princess Elizabeth, who was born in September 1533, and to her mother Queen Anne, who fell into disgrace early in May 1536.² Since Bigod would certainly at this stage have done nothing to alienate the interest and goodwill of the King, his book may hence confidently be placed between these two dates. The bibliographers have usually taken 1535 as the most probable year.³ Our reprint adheres closely to Bigod's spelling and punctuation, which are not disturbingly remote from modern usage. He was educated in Wolsey's household and at Oxford: hence, though he once quotes a northern dialect saying,⁴ his forms preserve few traces of the English of his Yorkshire background.

Regarding the career and opinions of Sir Francis Bigod, the present editor has recently written at some length;⁵ here he proposes no more than a brief recapitulation of the facts most necessary to an understanding of the text. Bigod was born in October 1507, lost his father in the Scottish War, and succeeded in 1515 to the estates of his distinguished grandfather Sir Ralph Bigod. His was no ordinary gentle family, for it inherited lands and prestige from two great baronial houses of medieval England. It descended from a brother of that last of the old Earls of Norfolk who died childless in 1302, yet the greater part of its lands came from the de Mauleys, whose male line had become extinct in 1415, leaving the lady Constance Bigod, sister of the last Peter de Mauley, as a coheir. Most of the lands which descended to little Francis lay in two

¹ The *Short Title Catalogue* lists only the Brit. Mus. copy, which I have used. The Lambeth Palace Library has, however, another bound in a collection of tracts.

² *Infra*, pp. 43, 58.

³ 'This most noble empyre of England' (p. 42, *infra*) does not greatly help, since similar phraseology occurs already in the Act of Restraint of Appeals (24 Hen. VIII cap. 12) passed in February-March 1533.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 57.

⁵ *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 53-113.

groups. The smaller one near Whitby included Mulgrave Castle, with the manors of Hinderwell and Seaton; the larger one lay in the East Riding and embraced Settrington, Birdsall, Bainton, Hunmanby, Lockington, Duggleby and other lands in the Malton area.¹ The latter was the district in which Sir Francis was destined over twenty years later to begin his resuscitation of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Meanwhile in 1515, Cardinal Wolsey acquired the wardship of the young heir, and it was in this magnate's immense and brilliant household, the nursery of the Court, the episcopal bench and the civil service, that Bigod received an education far more elaborate than that of any ordinary Yorkshire gentleman. At some stage of the twenties, he was also sent to study in the University of Oxford, whence he emerged with a scholarly grasp of Latin, strong legal and theological interests and, by mid-Tudor standards, a considerable mastery of lucid and forceful English. A modern reader unfamiliar with the verbal fumbling of average, semi-literate country gentry of the reign of Henry VIII would certainly tend to undervalue the attainments represented by this treatise. In so many respects Sir Francis became anything but an average denizen of his home background, and herein lay many of his difficulties. It seems also quite possible that, while yet at Oxford, he encountered the Protestant opinions known to have attracted him in later years. Wolsey's newly founded Cardinal College soon became a focus of heresy (imported from Cambridge), while Thomas Garret, *alias* Gerard, the chief Oxford Lutheran of the twenties, was to reappear as Bigod's personal chaplain in the mid-thirties.² Early in 1528 Garret's circle was forcibly broken up by the Oxford authorities. Within a year Bigod left the Cardinal's service, came home to Yorkshire and by special dispensation, given in November 1528 by Wolsey as Archbishop of York,³ married his kinswoman Katharine, daughter of the first Lord Conyers of Hornby. On 21 December 1529 he had livery of his grandfather's lands, and soon afterwards he received the honour of knighthood. His marriage soon proved fruitful;⁴ in 1534 he contracted to marry his heir Ralph to a daughter of Lord Latimer of Snape, who had recently married Katharine Parr, and whose household also seems to have been well disposed to the new religious opinions.⁵

This apparent prelude to a distinguished career was heavily marred by the incubus of debt with which Bigod emerged from

¹ In addition, much information concerning the various branches and estates of the Bigods is given by C. Moor in *Y.A.J.*, xxxii. 172 *seqq.*

² On Garret's adventures at Oxford, see Foxe, v. 421 *seqq* and Appendix vi.

³ York Diocesan Records, Reg. Wolsey, fo. 132v.

⁴ His daughter Dorothy appears in Tonge's Visitation of 1530 (*Surtees Soc.*, xli. 67).

⁵ For his complicated dealings with Latimer, see *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 61-2, 68.

wardship; the system was an iniquity springing from the Crown, which made guardians pay handsomely for the privilege of wringing profit from the estates of their wards.¹ Though Bigod spent much time in London and in travelling on public and private business, there is no evidence to substantiate the old charge that he was a spendthrift. A contemporary survey of his estates shows that their income was by no means so impressive as their extent might suggest; it also gives the impression of traditional landlordism not yet geared to extract a reasonable yield.² In addition, an exaggerated sense of family loyalty forebade Bigod for several years to seek the obvious remedy: a sale of a part of his lands in order to settle his debts. Among the voluminous papers of Thomas Cromwell are several letters relating to the pressure which London financiers were exerting upon him: these men Cromwell held at arm's length, while nevertheless failing to gratify Bigod's request for large loans.³ All the young knight's extant letters are written to his patron Cromwell, whom he must have known in Wolsey's household, and with whom he was certainly on intimate terms during the three years preceding the Pilgrimage of Grace.

In 1534, about the time he was writing the *Treatise*, Bigod achieved some prominence both as a henchman of Cromwell and as a furtherer of the Henrician Reformation. When in London he acted as agent for provincial Reforming groups, who held his zeal and knowledge in high regard.⁴ Though still in his mid-twenties, he was sent north in June 1535 to give Archbishop Lee and Bishop Tunstall the King's instructions for setting forth the Royal Supremacy. In this negotiation his functions exceeded those of a mere messenger, since he reported to Cromwell not only upon the demeanour and attitude of these conservative prelates, but upon the arrangements made by them and other northern clergy to preach the Supremacy.⁵ He also served as a J.P. for the East Riding⁶ and was among the Yorkshire commissioners for the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.⁷ At home in Settrington he displayed publicly an abstract of the Statute of Supremacy in order to enlighten local opinion through all those of his neighbours and tenants who could read.⁸ In the *Treatise* modern readers will not fail to remark his obsession with sermon-preaching, one he manifested in life as well as in literature. Two of his preaching chaplains, Thomas Garret and William Jerome, were both destined to become Protestant martyrs in the reaction which followed the fall of Thomas Cromwell. And in the strangest of his own letters he besought Cromwell that,

¹ Cf. H. E. Bell, *Hist. and Records of the Court of Wards and Liveries*, ch.vi.

² *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 56.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, viii. 849, 854, 869.

⁷ *Ibid.*, viii. 149, 463.

⁴ *L. & P.*, vii. 1071-2; ix. 189.

⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 838(30); 1694(ii).

⁸ *Lollards and Protestants*, p. 76.

though married, he might be made a priest, or else be given a dispensation to preach as a layman. This letter also seeks to remind the King of his services, both in Parliament and in setting forth God's word by maintaining preachers in the North at his own cost. It strongly implies that Bigod sat for a time as a member of the Reformation Parliament, and there seems here no special improbability, since we do not know the names of all its members.¹

During these years he also extended his reforming zeal to the Yorkshire monasteries. With his chaplain Garret he visited Jervaulx to preach, and was there bound to report the treason of the monk George Lazenby, who interrupted Garret's sermon to support the Papal Supremacy. This simple but courageous man persisted in his defiance and ultimately suffered execution.² Bigod also took action to convince of error the Carthusians of Mountgrace, who were said to have inspired Lazenby's resistance. Turning from the heroic to the scandalous, we may also learn much from the state-papers regarding the quarrels of Whitby Abbey, which stood near Mulgrave Castle and with which Bigod became deeply involved. Here he is seen backing a reform-group of monks, who were attempting to unseat their disreputable abbot, John Hexham. The latter was controlled by Bigod's bitter personal enemy Gregory Conyers, who in turn was a client of the Eures, the chief local rivals of the Bigods and the victors over Sir Francis in the rebellion he was soon to raise. Yet despite his moral pretensions, Bigod's status at Whitby was lowered not merely by the acts of violence between him and Conyers, but by the fact that he had borrowed money even from his adversary Abbot Hexham.³ His Yorkshire monastic connections were far from being limited to these houses. During the Pilgrimage he meddled a good deal in the troubled affairs of Guisborough Priory; while during his own rebellion he tried to stage a private Reformation at Watton, whence the prior, Robert Holgate, Master of Sempringham and a known Cromwellian, had wisely fled.⁴ Thus when in his *Treatise* Bigod writes about monks and their shortcomings, he may well lack impartiality and moderation, but he cannot be accused of personal remoteness from his subject.

The supposition that Sir Francis joined the Pilgrimage of Grace in a desperate attempt to wipe out his debts cannot be maintained. By July 1536 he was at last preparing to solve his problems by selling some of the ancestral lands.⁵ Again, so far from welcoming the rebellion, he strove at first with all his might to avoid implication. On hearing of its extension to Yorkshire early in October, he took ship from Mulgrave with the object of sailing to

¹ Cf. *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 77-8.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 79-82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁵ *L. & P.*, xi. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

London, yet by a malign fate a storm arose and drove his vessel back to Hartlepool. Fleeing thence to escape impressment into the Durham rising, he came back home, but only to be carried along by a body of Yorkshire rebels to York.¹ Unpopular through his notoriously advanced religious views and through his friendship with Cromwell, he could not have won acceptance into the inner ring of Robert Aske's advisers, even had he desired so dangerous an eminence. Nevertheless, while present with the insurgents at Pontefract early in December, he wrote a long and elaborate memorandum on Church and State, which is apparently no longer extant. The evidence of witnesses, later examined concerning his treason, show it to have been a piece of fundamental thinking, the interest of which might well have equalled or exceeded that of the *Treatise concernyng Impropriations*. It certainly represented a more advanced and radical stage of Bigod's development. That bold yeoman John Hallam, later his accomplice in rebellion, testified that the memorandum showed what authority belonged to a Pope, what to a bishop and what to a King, saying that the head of the English Church might be a bishop, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, but in no wise the King. Bigod, said Hallam, feared that the King was claiming to have the cure of souls. Prior Cockerell of Guisborough also gave some evidence on the work, and he agreed with Hallam that Bigod had relegated the King to the mere office of a secular protector over the Church.² It would be both crude and imperceptive to ascribe this revulsion to simple affronted ambition. Truly, Bigod resented the failure of the King and Cromwell to grant him adequate rewards for his services, yet there can be no doubt that, in addition, he turned against their policy out of genuine intellectual convictions. The latter now bade him to reject the Royal Supremacy, which he had still accepted in the *Treatise*, but which he now conceived to harbour terrifying possibilities. This development seems by no means illogical. Even in the *Treatise*, he is striving for a renovation of religion and of society at the hands of a new and more spiritual order of clergy, endowed with the entire proceeds of their benefices, given full opportunity for sacred studies and for the preparation of those sermons which should uplift the people from sin, barbarism and superstition. Bigod became in fact a Puritan ecclesiast, anticipating something very like the Calvinist theocracy which would one day appear in England and threaten the authority of both bishops and kings. It seems all too evident that, even before the collapse of the Pilgrimage in December, he had entered upon a fatal course of thinking and had begun to see in rebellion a feasible means of creating this godly order in Church and State.

¹ *L. & P.*, xii(1). 578. A full account of Bigod's share in the Pilgrimage and of his own rebellion is in *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 90-102.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 92-4 gives references.

The present editor has elsewhere essayed the task of reconstructing Bigod's mental processes in January 1537, when the young knight briefly occupied the centre of the stage by attempting to renew the Pilgrimage of Grace.¹ Fantastic as we may find his notion that so reactionary a movement might have been canalised into Reforming courses, ample evidence shows that we are not in fact witnessing the sudden aberration of a hysterical or half-mad desperado. Bigod's speeches and strategic plans were not merely coherent, but in some respects able and far-seeing. His information afforded him confident hopes of a supporting rebellion in Richmondshire and Durham, backed by the aggrieved Percy interest which had already taken a notable share in the Pilgrimage. Bigod himself planned to operate from the Beverley area, capture the strongholds of Hull and Scarborough, and so lure the Duke of Norfolk with a small force into the North, where the royal commander might easily be outflanked and captured. The rising did not collapse because Bigod lacked military and political logic, but because he abysmally misjudged the prevalent psychology of Yorkshiremen and especially that of their easily-pacified leaders. It was one thing to stir up, as Bigod did, a few hundred of his proletarian neighbours to enthusiasm, but quite another to make the now sobered gentry of Yorkshire throw aside the King's offer of a pardon and lead their people once more along the dark and slippery paths of rebellion. Because of this miscalculation—fundamental enough, yet perfectly intelligible in a young and sanguine intellectual—Sir Francis went to Tyburn on 2 June 1537, scarcely yet thirty years of age. His gradual relapse into the vortex of northern rebellion induced some contemporaries, like Wilfrid Holme of Huntingdon,² to suppose that he must have reverted to Catholic religious views. Certain modern observers, overestimating the religious content of the Pilgrimage, have done the same. No real support can be found for this view. Bigod's last pathetic letter from prison begs Cromwell to be good lord to William Jerome and another of his Lutheran followers.³ He died as he had lived, an idealist of the New Learning. That Arch-Protestant John Bale knew he was no turncoat and dubbed him *homo naturalium splendore nobilis et doctus et evangelicae veritatis amator*. These expressions are curiously appropriate, for while it would be arbitrary to call any man the first English Puritan, the title might sit upon Sir Francis Bigod as easily as upon any.

It remains to write a few words on the theme of the *Treatise*. At first sight the little book might be supposed a routine item of the anticlerical literature of the thirties: its indiscriminate attack upon the idleness, gluttony and immorality of the monks clearly owes a

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 94 *seqq.*, 107-12.

² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 105.

³ P.R.O., S.P.1/116, fos. 163-164v; cf. *L. & P.*, xii(1). 533 and *Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 102-4.

good deal to the violent *Supplication for Beggars* of the London lawyer Simon Fish. Even so, these heavy innuendos and passages of alliterative abuse do not form the real core of Bigod's argument. Where practical proposals were involved, Bigod was not an extremist in relation to the monasteries. He called for a seizure of their appropriated benefices and was prepared to see the monastic orders approaching much more closely to the life of poverty envisaged by their founders. Yet he did not desire the wholesale dissolution which was soon to overtake them. His aim in the *Treatise* was constructive; only as a corollary did it involve an attack upon monasticism. It concerned the grand passion of his career: the institution and proper endowment of a preaching and teaching clergy in the parishes. It was related to the rationalisation of church life soon to be attempted—as it would seem, with genuine conviction—by Thomas Cromwell in his ecclesiastical Injunctions.¹ Indeed, the impassive minister may well have been influenced or strengthened in his plans by the enthusiasm of younger and more naïve associates like Bigod and his chaplains.

The *Treatise concernyng Impropriations* represents a layman's sermon on the practical application to the English Church of certain texts from St. Paul: those relating to the duties and rights of the Church's teaching elders. Such texts Bigod cites at various points of the discussion, but the reader will understand his thesis more readily after seeing them quoted together. 'For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.'² 'What soldier ever serveth at his own charges?'³ 'If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?'⁴ 'Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they which wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.'⁵ 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his hire.'⁶

To the advancement of these principles, the system of appropriations seemed in the eyes of the Reformers a major stumbling block. The dangers to ecclesiastical interests which arose from free Bible-study were never more clearly illustrated than by Bigod's application of *Corinthians* to this system. To review the problem historically, it did not derive solely from the greed of religious houses. Lay patrons incur a part of the blame, for by giving benefices to the

¹ Cf. A. G. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation*, ch. viii.

² I Cor., i. 17.

⁴ I Cor., ix. 11.

⁶ I Tim., v. 17, 18.

³ I Cor., ix. 7.

⁵ I Cor., ix. 13, 14.

monks, they had usually been intent to assure their souls of prayers without cost to their own pockets. Again, popes, bishops and parliaments had all intervened in the matter, yet had completely failed to regulate even that gross and obvious abuse, whereby monasteries received rich tithes, but employed poor curates to serve the cure, sometimes even pledging them before institution not to ask for an augmentation of their wretched stipends. Even the Common Law had taken a hand by deciding that advowsons were private property, and that the unfortunate parishioners, however neglected, had no rights in the matter. Moreover, not a few laymen were netting a share of the profit, since religious houses often found it most convenient to farm out the tithes of scattered parishes to speculators well situated to collect them.¹ Bigod was by no means insensible to the folly of the medieval forefathers who had allowed these things to develop,² but it had now become inevitable that such critics would concentrate their fire upon the chief beneficiaries: the monks themselves. And it was equally natural that a Yorkshireman should take the lead in denouncing appropriations, since in Yorkshire they bulked so large. Professor Hamilton Thompson calculated that by the period of the Reformation the county contained about 622 parish churches, of which 392, or 63 per cent, were appropriated. Even in Lincolnshire, another heavily monastic county, only just over 50 per cent of the parishes had undergone this fate. In most appropriated churches, vicarages were ordained, the vicar receiving the small tithes or a fixed annual stipend, the balance accruing to the monastery. In Yorkshire, however, an exceptionally high proportion—over a hundred of the 392 appropriated churches—did not receive this bare decency, but were served simply by curates, usually ill-paid, without rights and removable at the will of the monastic proprietors. Bigod's monkish acquaintances at Guisborough afforded a notable example of this practice: of the seventeen churches appropriated to the Priory, at least ten or eleven remained without vicars. Such houses of Augustinian canons also commonly sent their own members to serve their parishes.³ On the other hand, the great Cistercian abbeys of Yorkshire, with the partial exception of Kirkstall, held few appropriations of any sort.⁴

It seems impossible to assess with any accuracy the influence of Bigod's tract upon public opinion. He obviously intended it to be read by the non-learned, since, like several other contemporary writers, he took care to translate every text from the Vulgate. He was incidentally also careful to avoid the phraseology of Tyndale's version, which he must have known well, but which from the King's

¹ For brief comment and some useful references on appropriations cf. H. Maynard Smith, *Pre-Reformation England*, pp. 36-8.

² Cf. *infra*, p. 57.

³ Cf. *infra*, p. 49, n. 4.

⁴ A. Hamilton Thompson, *The English Clergy*, pp. 115 *seqq.*

viewpoint was tainted with heresy.¹ As usual, we have no evidence as to the size of the edition, but judging from the paucity of surviving copies, it is unlikely to have been very large. In subsequent anticlerical tracts, there are some possible but by no means certain traces of its influence. *A Supplycacion to our most Soveraigne Lorde Kynge Henry the Eyght* (1544) has parallel language concerning a preaching ministry.² *A Supplication of the Poore Commons* (1546) repeats, though with changes of detail, Bigod's story about the pluralist who had so many benefices that he did not recognise one of them as his own, even when he inadvertently visited the parish itself.³ Henry Brinklow's *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors* (1545) sometimes recalls Bigod's phrases,⁴ while lay impropiators underwent violent attacks from the Elizabethan puritans who were Bigod's real intellectual successors.⁵

In later times Sir Henry Spelman was certainly familiar with the tract, since he reprinted its brief preface in the 1647 edition of his *Larger Work of Tithes*. It may confidently be supposed that Bigod would have been as dissatisfied as the puritans and as Spelman himself with the immediate impact made upon his problem by the 'official' Reformation. As Brinklow was quick to remark, the substitution of lay rectors for the monks did not necessarily improve the situation for the parish clergy and for their parishioners. What was there to choose between a parasitic monastery and an equally parasitic squire who neglected his ecclesiastical obligations and regarded impropriated tithes as a form of rent? It seems probable that a variety of factors combined to improve the economic situation of many clergy as the century advanced.⁶ Yet to say the least, it would have been consistent with the high pretensions of the government had it set aside class-interests and legislated with decision upon the abuses to which Sir Francis Bigod had so forcibly drawn attention.

II

Since 1932, when Sir Maurice Powicke drew to my notice one of the manuscript books of Robert Parkyn, fresh information has emerged at frequent intervals concerning the life and activities of this literary priest. I hope some day to write a connected and

¹ Parallels are given in the notes *infra*.

² *E.E.T.S., Extra Ser.*, xiii. 26-7; cf. also pp. 22, 33, 55.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 78; cf. *infra*, p. 53.

⁴ Cf. *E.E.T.S., Extra Ser.*, xxii. 33, 'improperd personages'.

⁵ Cf. Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, pp. 9, 10, 12, 95, 132.

⁶ F. W. Brooks, *The Social Position of the Parson in the Sixteenth Century* in *Journal of the Brit. Archaeol. Association*, third ser., x. 23 *seqq.* For the very varied circumstances of Tudor clerics, see *The Leicestershire Country Parson* in W. G. Hoskins, *Essays in Leicestershire History*.

tolerably definitive biography, which should throw not a little light upon the social and cultural history of Tudor Yorkshire.¹ Parkyn sprang from a substantial yeoman family at Owston near Doncaster, and became heir to various lands and messuages in that neighbourhood.² He presumably learned his Latin at the chantry school of Owston, but he first appears in 1541 as a priest in the service of Humphrey Gascoigne, an aristocratic pluralist. Not long after this date he became curate of Adwick-le-Street, there to remain until his death on 23 March 1569.³ It was indeed fortunate that he possessed private means, since the benefice of Adwick was one of those most vividly illustrating the grievances expressed by Sir Francis Bigod against the monasteries. Along with its neighbours at Marr and Melton, it had been appropriated to Hampole Priory, the curates each receiving the miserable stipend of £4. 13s. 4d. per annum.⁴ Robert's brother John went to Cambridge and was from 1546 a Fellow of Trinity College.⁵ Though Robert himself did not enjoy such advantages, he worked assiduously in a tradition which was already becoming *démodé* around the middle of the century. It is precisely this fact which occasions a good deal of the historical interest surrounding his literary activities. Concerning the latter, our knowledge largely depends upon five manuscripts, and a rapid summary of their contents will perhaps form the best introduction to the selections we propose to print.

The first of the five to be investigated was Bodleian MS Lat. Th. d. 15,⁶ a large miscellany compiled by Parkyn over the two decades ending in 1565. Over half consists of three well-known treatises by Richard Rolle, who had lived two centuries earlier at Hampole inside Parkyn's own parish of Adwick. The relevance of this local cult to our extracts will soon become apparent. The rest of the book includes a genealogy of the Kings of Israel; a summary of the Pauline epistles; three curious devotional poems; a Latin sermon based on St. Jerome's commentary on St. Matthew; a Latin catalogue of the Kings of England, drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth and continued by Parkyn to the accession of Elizabeth; a rhyming history of these kings, partly based on that of Lydgate;

¹ The present editor's many articles on Parkyn are almost all cited in the notes which follow.

² His Inquisition *post mortem* (P.R.O., C.142/151/28) shows over 73 acres and several messuages, closes and crofts, mainly in the parishes of Owston, Brodsworth and Campsall. None of his relatives appears to be styled gentlemen, but they may well have been related to the well-known gentle family at Fishlake.

³ The date 23 March 11 Eliz. is quite clearly given in the Inquisition *post mortem*, and disproves my former statement (based on the date of probate of his will) that Parkyn died in 1570.

⁴ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, v. 51.

⁵ For an account of John, including the text of his interesting will, see *Proc. Cambridge Antiquarian Soc.*, xliii. 21 *seqq.*

⁶ Catalogued by the present editor in *E.H.R.*, lxii. 58-60.

a copy of Lydgate's versified rules of health, and five letters of Cyprian. The book also shows its compiler to have been a devotee of Sir Thomas More, whose son John retired after his father's execution to the house of the Cresacres at Barnborough near Adwick.¹ Parkyn copied in this book three known prayers of More, together with a long meditation, which he ascribed to the same author and which I published in 1937, accepting the attribution.² This meditation must now, however, be given to More's fellow-sufferer John Fisher, since successive drafts of it in Fisher's handwriting are to be found amongst the bishop's papers in the Public Record Office.³ Finally, the most interesting item of this miscellany is Parkyn's violently conservative account of the Reformation, which concludes on a triumphant note amid the Marian Reaction. This last was printed with full notes in 1947.⁴

Also in the Bodleian are two other Parkyn manuscripts. One of these, MS. Eng. Poet. e 59,⁵ consists of a single item, a *Life of Christ* in rime royal over 10,000 lines in length. It was composed by Parkyn between 1548 and 1555 and intended for oral recital to a lay audience. Like most verse of the period, its scansion is exceedingly rough and irregular, yet with some narrative skill it conflates the four Gospels and concludes with Pentecost and the going forth of the apostles to preach. Though well versed in the Bible, Parkyn here does not scruple to import many apocryphal legends and glosses; in addition, it would be difficult to exonerate him from a charge of mariolatry. His notes show frequent indebtedness to Jerome, Gregory, Cassiodorus, Bede, Aquinas and, most frequently, to the great Spanish Dominican preacher, St. Vincent Ferrer. Related to this manuscript is Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. b. 1,⁶ a collection of seven sheets of paper containing rough drafts of 126 stanzas of the *Life of Christ*. For this purpose Parkyn used the backs, margins and inter-linear spaces of his correspondence, an economical habit which has happily preserved five intimate letters of the years 1554-5: two from his brother John and three from a neighbouring colleague, William Watson, curate of Melton on the Hill. The former discusses various family-problems and sends Robert (from Cambridge by a Kendal carrier) several books, including Hardyng's *Chronicle*, the printed Acts of Parliament and commentaries by Denis the Carthusian (1402-1471). William

¹ J. Hunter, *South Yorkshire*, i. 374.

² *Church Quarterly Review*, July-Sept. 1937, pp. 224 *seqq.*

³ S.P.1/93, fos. 99-102. These drafts, though undoubtedly in Fisher's hand, are hard to read, and the text derived from them in *The Month*, Feb. 1952, pp. 108-111, is understandably inaccurate; it needs checking with the Parkyn version, which is in dialect, but clear and correct, as a comparison with Fisher's original has shown.

⁴ *E.H.R.*, lxii. 64 *seqq.*

⁵ Described by the editor in *Bodleian Library Record*, iv, no. 2, pp. 67 *seqq.*

⁶ Described by the same in *ibid.*, iii, no. 29, pp. 34 *seqq.*

Watson's letters are also by no means devoid of interest. Quite understandably in the case of a cleric so poorly beneficed, he has much to say about his poverty; he also conceals plans with Parkyn to say a trental of masses for the souls of their friends and benefactors. All those five letters have elsewhere been printed.¹

A fourth manuscript from Parkyn's pen is the well-known text of John Mirk's *Liber Festialis* in the Library of Southwell Minster. This long and laborious transcript is unsigned, but entirely in Parkyn's unmistakable hand; it is followed by eight short lives of saints, marked by his personal style and presumably his original compositions. Much more important is the fifth and last manuscript, the one from which all the present selections are drawn. This is MS 185 in the Library of Aberdeen University, to the Librarian of which I am greatly indebted for lending the manuscript to the Library of the University of Hull.

With several items of this Aberdeen book we are not directly concerned.² Amongst these are a Latin Concordance of both Testaments comprising over 26,000 entries and finished by Parkyn on 18 April 1551; a copy, made 19-20 July 1555, of More's *Treatise to receave the blessed Body of our Lorde*; and a large part of Thomas Stapleton's *Apologie of Fridericus Staphylus*, a bitterly anti-Protestant work by a Roman Catholic *émigré*, published at Antwerp in 1565.³ That Parkyn in his last years took the trouble to transcribe this last lengthy work suggests that, while he continued to minister the Anglican rite at Adwick-le-Street, he had not significantly modified those strong anti-Reformation prejudices he had expressed during the reign of Mary. Yet it seems worth notice that the interesting list of books mentioned in his will⁴ includes 'Mr. Calvin's booke in print'; this he leaves to a layman: James Washington, the squire of Adwick-le-Street and a witness to the will.

Between fos. 210v and 217 of the Aberdeen manuscript are seven short homilies or treatises on the spiritual life, all to the best of my knowledge original compositions by Parkyn, however derivative their subject-matter.

- (a) *Prayer, fastynge and alms deyde*. These are brief and trite notes on the works of penance, recalling in various details similar passages in works of the Rolle group⁵ and in

¹ Those of John Parkyn in *Proc. Cambridge Antiquarian Soc.*, xliii. 21 *seqq.* and those of Watson in *Trans. Hunter Archaeol. Soc.*, vi. pt. 6, 278 *seqq.*

² A full list of contents is in *Notes and Queries*, Feb. 1949, p. 73.

³ Parkyn's copy (fos. 228v—251v) includes the dedicatory epistle, prologue, books i and ii, together with a selection from book iii.

⁴ These are fully listed in *E.H.R.*, lxii. 61-2.

⁵ Cf. Horstman, i. 25, 149; ii. 433; *The Mending of Life* (*E.E.T.S.*, cvi, p. 112).

contemporary authors like More,¹ Fisher² and William Bonde.³

- (b) *Of 4 lyves*, printed *infra*, pp. 59-61.
- (c) *Off the highest learnynge*, printed *infra*, pp. 61-63. These last two are concerned with the contemplative or mystical approach, which we shall presently discuss.
- (d) *Of death*, printed *infra*, pp. 63-67. This, like the three items which follow, is little concerned with contemplation, but is a homiletic treatise, enumerating the various forms of death to which man is subject; man's need to prepare himself for death; the danger that sudden death may take him unawares; the fact that at death man's use of free-will has gone, and God must proceed thence by justice and no longer by mercy.
- (e) *Of hells*. Another homily, of which certain passages derive, on Parkyn's own showing, from the treatises on the Christian life written by St. Anthoninus, Archbishop of Florence (1389-1459).
- (f) *Off hevin*. This has a description of the angelic hierarchies, which could be derived from many medieval treatises, all based on the *Celestial Hierarchy* of the Pseudo-Areopagite Dionysius, whose works Parkyn probably knew through the extensive commentary upon them by one of his favourite authors, Denis the Carthusian.
- (g) *Of the most wholly [holy] and glorius trinitie*. Mainly a list of the attributes of the Holy Trinity, presumably deriving from the *Divine Names* of the Pseudo-Areopagite Dionysius,⁴ again perhaps through Denis the Carthusian.

Of these seven treatises Parkyn appears to have completed the fair copy between April 1551, when he finished the preceding item, the Concordance, and July 1555, when he copied the next item into his book, More's *Treatise to receave*. Another clue to their date may possibly lie in one of John Parkyn's letters, written on 24 April 1555 and announcing the despatch to Robert of the works of Denis the Carthusian.⁵ If Robert Parkyn used this copy of Denis in writing the last two treatises—though it cannot be assumed with certainty that he did—they could be dated June-July 1555.

After the More item, there begins (fo. 220) the best essay ostensibly attributable to Parkyn, *A breave rulle very profitable to all suche to reye as intende to lyffe a Christian lyffe*, which is followed (fos. 225-6) by *13 preceptes necessarie for him thatt entendithe to lyve a contemplatyve lyffe*, a short but striking summary

¹ *Works*, p. 1262; 'Let us fall to fasting, to prayer, to almes dede in time.'

² *Ways to Perfect Religion in A Spiritual Consolation*, ed. D. O'Connor, p. 35.

³ *A devote treatyse for them that ben tymorouse* (? 1534), ch. xii.

⁴ Parkyn presumably means the Pseudo-Areopagite when (fo. 216v) he cites 'S. Dionysse'.

⁵ *Proc. Cambridge Antiquarian Soc.*, xliii. 24.

of the *Brief Rule*. Both these are printed below *in extenso*. At the beginning of the *Brief Rule* Parkyn urges submission to the Catholic Church, avoidance of heresies and schisms, devotion to the Virgin and the company of the saints, all in strongly Marian terms, which he would have been more likely to use before than after 1559. The subsequent items in the book do not supply a useful terminal date. On fos. 226-8 is a short undated Latin essay on the names of the seventy disciples, and from fo. 228v to the end of the book runs Thomas Stapleton's translation, which Parkyn may well have copied after its publication in 1565.

A more useful clue arises, however, from the likelihood that Parkyn's *Brief Rule* received influences from the *Spiritual Exercises* of the Dominican friar William Peryn.¹ This book was published in 1557 and if its influence be accepted, we could thus place the *Brief Rule* in the years 1557-9. Peryn's work has original elements, but it was substantially translated from that of his Flemish associate Nicholas van Ess, which had appeared in 1548, the same year as the Latin edition of the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola. Both Peryn and van Ess had enjoyed contacts with the Society of Jesus during the forties, and their knowledge of the Jesuit technique becomes apparent in Peryn's book. As for Parkyn, his debt to the latter (and hence his indirect relation with the Jesuits) may be regarded as a probability rather than a certainty. Broad resemblances of thought, style and approach are frequently apparent, but they are diffused rather than verbally close. I point out a number of the more obvious parallels in the notes appended to Parkyn's text. In addition, certain particular features—notably the use of 'aspirations' or dart-prayers—are difficult to trace to any other available source save that of Peryn. Here then is a probable link between Parkyn and a Counter Reformation book subsequently in use among the Elizabethan recusants, a book used, for example, by Margaret Clitheroe.² At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Parkyn's debt to Rolle, Hilton and other medieval contemplatives is more readily demonstrable than his debt to his contemporary Peryn. All his basic concepts are commonplaces of fourteenth and fifteenth century mysticism.

Of the five Parkyn items which we print, four (*The Brief Rule*, the *Thirteen Precepts*, the *Four Lives* and the *Highest Learning*) clearly belong to the contemplative or mystical tradition of Christian life and thought, the tradition which had its founders in St.

¹ On Peryn see *D.N.B.*; *S.T.C.*, nos. 19784-87 and *The Spiritual Exercises of a Dominican Friar*, ed. C. Kirchberger (1929). For the sake of convenience, I give references to this modern edition, though it is violently abbreviated and modernised. The Brit. Mus. has copies of Peryn's *Spiritual Exercises* (4404 c.57) and also of his *Thre godlye and notable Sermons* (c. 12. d. 6).

² See Fr. Mush's *Life* in J. Morris, *Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers*, iii. 393. She also used the *Imitatio Christi*.

Augustine, the Pseudo-Areopagite Dionysius and St. Gregory. Having in the twelfth century received a further impetus from St. Bernard and the Victorines, it reached a great climax, both qualitative and quantitative, in the fourteenth century. Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, together with their many German and Netherlandish contemporaries and successors, were rivalled by two great Englishmen, Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton, both of the diocese of York and the leaders of that predominantly Yorkshire school of writers which made our most distinctive regional contribution to medieval culture. Robert Parkyn's devotional writings contain abundant internal evidence of his debt to these writers. He should be regarded as a belated member of the school rather than as a mere revivalist. In this respect, he did not stand alone. During the earlier years of his life numerous works by Rolle,¹ Hilton² and other fourteenth and fifteenth-century devotional writers were still being printed. The Bridgettines of Syon and members of the Carthusian Order were actively pursuing mystical studies until the dissolution, while at Hampole near Parkyn's home the cult of Richard Rolle was maintained at least up to the reign of Henry VIII.³ As observed, Parkyn began his literary activities by copying Rolle's treatises, and his debt to the fourteenth century contemplatives becomes apparent throughout all his original writings in the mystical vein. Yet however retrospective, he shows a lively response to the tradition and a firm grasp of its essentials. Both the spiritual preparation and the actual 'experiences' described by the mystical writers display throughout the centuries clearly recognizable patterns. These writers distinguish between the active and the contemplative lives, but commonly, with the life of Christ himself in mind, they also admit a 'mixed' life, suitable to prelates, secular clergy and to a few gifted laymen. Even such laymen might attain to contemplative values, while continuing the worldly responsibilities and cares necessitated by charity. Hilton's *Treatise written to a Devout Man* was specifically composed for such people. Parkyn admits these three ways of life, but adds to them a fourth: the 'miserable life', which can mean either the merely vicious life, or else a life dragged down by extreme penury. This last division I have not observed in his predecessors,⁴ and whether or not it be original to Parkyn, it would seem a natural enough development in a mid-Tudor writer. Mendicant poverty had been divested of its glamour; the beggar and the vagabond had become so much the scourge of society as to be excluded, on any

¹ S.T.C., nos. 21259 *seqq.*; *Brit. Mus. Cat. of Printed Books*, s.v. Rolle; W. T. Freemantle, *Bibliog. of Sheffield*, pp. 164 *seqq.*

² S.T.C., nos. 14041-5: four editions of the *Scale of Perfection*, 1494-1533, and an undated edition of *The Medled Lyfe*, i.e. the *Treatise written to a Devout Man*.

³ H. E. Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle*, p. 523 gives details.

⁴ Hilton (*Scale*, i, ch.lxxv) thinks of hunger, bodily pain and occupation as obstacles to contemplation.

realistic reckoning, from those ways of life to which positive values might be attached.

As his works show, Parkyn had a natural taste for scholarship, but he followed Rolle and the *Imitatio Christi* and other mystical writers in placing the life of learning upon a far lower level than the life of the contemplative.¹ Even Hilton, one of the less anti-intellectual of his predecessors, had said, 'This knowing [knowledge] alone is but water, unsavoury and cold.'² So far as mystical practice is concerned, Parkyn again follows the common Dionysian pattern by envisaging the three basic phases: the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways; the first by penance and works of mercy, the second in various stages of spiritual experience, the third begun in the case of advanced contemplatives on earth, but perfected in heaven. In such writings, no rigid division arises between ascetical and mystical theology, and Parkyn is in no sense exceptional in devoting so much of his attention to topics which nowadays would fall decisively under the former heading. Again, the stages or divisions of illumination and union are defined somewhat diversely by medieval authors. Parkyn gives his own scheme most clearly in *The Four Lives*.³ After dismissing purgation ('mortification') and vocal prayer, he mentions a third stage of *excess* or *elevation*, arising from wonder at the bounty and goodness of God, a fourth stage of *ecstasy*, the drawing of man's spirit to God by love, and a fifth, of *rapture* into the actual sight or presence of God, a stage which (in common with others) he exemplifies from the experience of St. Paul.⁴ He is clear concerning the distinction between meditation and contemplation, the first normally taking the form of discursive prayer upon a theme,⁵ the second being ineffable and unamenable to verbal analysis, 'the wiche thinge no man can expresse.'⁶ Also amongst the accepted concepts is his emphasis upon progress toward God through self-knowledge,⁷ a theme prominent in mystics as diverse as Richard of St. Victor and St. Catherine of Siena.⁸ Parkyn stands in what might be termed the 'pure tradition' of mysticism: he has no interest in the lurid visions, the trivial 'favours', the dramatic emotionalism and the rest of the stock-in-trade of certain late medieval female mystics. And while it cannot be claimed that he shares the natural fervour of Rolle or the subtle distinctions of style and analysis exhibited by Hilton, his writing is forceful and clear, his sanity reassuring, his zeal contagious. In this Yorkshire

¹ *Infra*, p. 61.

² *Scale*, i. ch. iv.

³ *Infra*, pp. 60-61.

⁴ Cf. C. Butler, *Western Mysticism*, p. 57.

⁵ Cf. *infra*, p. 60. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola afford a classic example of meditative treatment.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 61.

⁷ *Infra*, p. 61.

⁸ Cf. E. Gardner, *The Cell of Self-Knowledge*, pp. xxv-xxvi.

priest, until recently unknown, a great regional tradition finds a not altogether unworthy terminal figure.

Certain obvious queries remain. To what extent, if at all, did Parkyn himself enjoy contemplative 'experiences'? Is his description of such 'experiences' purely derivative? And from which particular works did he derive most? In my judgment, the evidence arising from these treatises does not permit of dogmatic answers to such questions. Parkyn is notably wary of spiritual pride and luxury. Indeed, much of the *Brief Rule* is concerned with matters only indirectly related to 'experiences' and it deprecates overmuch preoccupation with them. As with the works of Hilton, it is concerned at least as much with the moral and ascetic as with the strictly contemplative life, and it forms another timely reminder that the contemplative approach was then not envisaged as the esoteric preserve of a tiny *élite*, but as in some measure open to all devout Christians.¹ Like Hilton, Parkyn is hence concerned with instruction, not with autobiography.² Both Hilton and he would probably have been not a little shocked by poor, well-meaning Margery Kempe, whose pathetic vagaries so often verged upon exhibitionism and whose self-concern conveys so inadequate a notion of contemporary ideals. Hence we cannot confidently assume on negative evidence that Parkyn was a mere pious *littérateur*, bookishly describing experiences at second-hand. On the other hand, he cannot be claimed as a 'master' or 'director', in the manner of Hilton and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. We should not, for example, base conjectures regarding his spiritual life upon the words, 'the which by writing I cannot express, as the author of knowledge and love doth know.'³ This seems a mere pious expression characteristic of Parkyn: very similar expressions also occur in Peryn, though in this case the Yorkshire writer is probably not imitating the Dominican.⁴ Yet whatever his achievement as a practitioner, Parkyn compiled a serviceable compendium of techniques which have stood the test of time and have been advocated by distinguished spiritual directors from that day to this. What, for example, could be more practical or timeless than his advocacy (presumably derived from Peryn) of 'aspirations';⁵ again, than his use of sacred imagery to expel secular imagery, 'as one nail driveth out another';⁶ or than

¹ Cf. E. Underhill, *Introd.* to W. Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, pp. xxx-xxxi; C. Butler, *Western Mysticism*, p. 222.

² For a scholarly view of Hilton see Helen Gardner in *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, xxii. 103 *seqq.*

³ *Infra*, p. 63.

⁴ Parkyn's expression occurs in *The Highest Learning*, which, as observed, probably antedates the publication of Peryn's *Spiritual Exercises*.

⁵ Cf. p. 82, *infra*, The actual idiom is, of course, marked by the customary *Schwärmerei* of late medieval devotion.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 82. On Peryn's 'aspirations' see *infra*, p. 82, n. 4.

his attitude to the problems of aridity, scruple and distraction.¹

Though we must admit to knowing extremely little concerning his earlier life, no evidence has yet been found to show that at any stage Parkyn had a personal instructor in the theory and practice of contemplation. I am not aware that he enjoyed direct personal contacts with the Carthusians, or with the Brigettines of Syon, those communities where the most lively interest in contemplative arts persisted until the dissolution. He seems to have little in common with the strained devotional atmosphere of the London Charterhouse as described by Maurice Chauncy,² or with the previous generation of Carthusians, represented at Mountgrace by Prior Norton³ and Richard Methley,⁴ whose memory was still venerated there in Parkyn's youth.⁵ Even so, we must stress the point that he did not inhabit an intellectual vacuum. So far as South Yorkshire is concerned, the 'barbarous North' proves a false label, for in mid-Tudor times the area contained numerous clergymen with versatile literary interests,⁶ who lent and bequeathed one another books⁷ and who were *démodé* rather than ignorant.

In relation to his apparent sources, Parkyn is not slavish; his work is no mere *catena* of thinly disguised quotations. His debt to Peryn is a limited one, and in any case seems limited to the *Brief Rule* and the *Thirteen Precepts*. What of his earlier sources? Here again, it is seldom possible to demonstrate with certainty a close verbal parallel. As observed, Parkyn actually copied Rolle manuscripts, while by the fifties numerous other relevant books were in print: treatises by Rolle and Hilton, the *Imitatio*,⁸ contemporary works like those of William Bonde⁹ and Richard Whitford,¹⁰ collections like that published by Pepwell in 1521.¹¹ Though he shows little likelihood of any debt to the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the notes to our text show how often Parkyn follows the substance of both Hilton's *Scale* and the *Imitatio*. In his ponderous copy of Denis the Carthusian, he could also learn much concerning the theory of contemplation from an author who was not only a commentator on the Pseudo-Areopagite, but a practising mystic with the title *Doctor Ecstaticus*. Parkyn's manuscript copy of Bishop Fisher's meditation,

¹ *Infra*, pp. 76, 77, 78, 81.

² *Historia aliquot . . . martyrum* (Mainz, 1550, etc.) translated as *The History of the Sufferings of Eighteen Carthusians* (1890).

³ Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS A. 6. 8.

⁴ Trinity College Cambridge, MS 1160.

⁵ Cf. *E.E.T.S.*, ccxii, pp. 29, 68, 105, 174.

⁶ *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Jahrgang 43 (1952), pp. 51 *seqq.*

⁷ Cf. the examples in *Trans. Hunter Archaeol. Soc.*, vi, pt. 6., 279-80.

⁸ For English versions, see *E.E.T.S.*, *Extra Series*, lxiii.

⁹ Cf. *S.T.C.*, nos. 3275-8; on Bond see Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, s.v. The title-page of *S.T.C.*, no. 3275 proves that he was a brother of Syon.

¹⁰ On Whitford's many works, cf. *S.T.C.*, 14563, 17532, 17542, 23961, 25412 *seqq.* and *D.N.B.*

¹¹ Reprinted by E. Gardner as *The Cell of Self-Knowledge*. This included Hilton's *Song of Angels*.

made about 1550, contains remarks on detachment from the love of creatures similar to those in his own *Brief Rule*.¹ He possessed an epitome of the works of St. Augustine² and was acquainted with numerous other patristic and medieval works capable of contributing to these treatises. And however gravely he overvalued apocryphal additions to sacred history, his knowledge of the Vulgate was thorough; it furnished by far the majority of his quotations. Altogether, any attempt to track down his debts exhaustively and in detail would prove not only unrewarding but unrealistic, since most of this limited and unoriginal range of ideas may be taken as the common property of an immense number of writers extending across a thousand years of Christian literary history. The notes to our text thus demonstrate merely a number of parallels in a few works known, or very possibly known, to Parkyn. It may well happen that readers will discover for themselves some closer and more significant parallels.

The linguistic interest attaching to Parkyn's writings will, it is hoped, attract the attention of some competent specialist at a later stage, when more of the material is in print. Yet here are some of our most authentic specimens of dialect-prose dating from the mid-Tudor period, when the printing presses were so rapidly advancing the standardisation of the literary language. In some degree, Parkyn's forms may be archaised and northernised through the frequency of their author's contact with the Rolle manuscripts, yet the everyday letters of his friend William Watson and of other Tudor Yorkshiremen show close linguistic relationships with Parkyn's texts. Again, he himself continues unaffectedly to use many of these dialect forms even when copying the works of recent southern writers like More and Stapleton. In the present text, the original spelling has been retained, apart from a few uncertainties involved when expanding Parkyn's somewhat inconsistent contractions. The punctuation has been modernised.

III

The third of our texts consists of a document headed *The Falle of Religiouse Howses, Colleges, Chantreys, Hospitalls, &c.* It occupies over 24 large folios, or 48 pages, of a manuscript book³ left to the British Museum by the distinguished eighteenth century antiquary William Cole. Apart from a few short extracts such as those given by Sir Henry Ellis in his *Original Letters*⁴ and by Dr.

¹ *Infra*, p. 68, n. 3. Such detachment was, of course, an integral feature of the illuminative way and could be drawn from many other possible sources.

² *E.H.R.*, lxii. 61.

³ Brit. Mus. Add. MS 5813, fos. 5-29. ⁴ *Third series*, iii. 31-5.

Gasquet in *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*¹ it has not hitherto been printed. Twenty years ago the present editor drew attention to many of its features in the *Church Quarterly Review*,² but since then some additional facts have come to light and the remarks which follow must be regarded as superseding certain passages of that article.

In his brief preface³ and epilogue,⁴ Cole remarks that he transcribed the original, the property of his friend Thomas Porter of Nottinghamshire and Cambridgeshire, working on it from 6 December to 10 December 1745. 'I have not observed,' he continues, 'the old spelling of the original, tho' I have the language of that time, which is false English throwout according to our present speech: and I have also divided it into paragraphs.' The original manuscript seems permanently to have vanished, but regarding the authenticity and substantial accuracy of Cole's transcript there can be no reasonable doubt. Apart from a few expansions of common abbreviations,⁵ it is reproduced below *verbatim* and in full.

The authorship can be established with something like certainty. In his preface Cole observes, 'This MS was written, as the said Mr. Porter informed me, by Cuthbert Shirebrook, a dignified ecclesiastic, as he supposed.' In his manuscript life of Archbishop Rotherham,⁶ Cole reverts to the topic and makes Porter give the author as 'an ecclesiastic of the Roman Church, whose name was Cuthbert Sherbrook'. 'But this,' continues the transcriber, 'I doubt for reasons I have given in its place'. These traditions seem indeed somewhat inaccurate, yet they become valuable clues when placed alongside a number of others, both external and internal to the manuscript. While giving no name, the author supplies not a little autobiographical information. He was born, and still dwelt at the time of writing, three miles from Rotherham.⁷ He was old enough to remember the bells still hanging in the steeple of neighbouring Roche Abbey, 'more than a year after the suppression'⁸ of June 1539. He was educated at the free school attached to the College of Rotherham⁹ and at the sale of church goods in 1553 made some purchases.¹⁰ Subsequently he translated into English, 'for the better instructing of my country people, that loveth to hear the godly lives and doctrine of holy men and women,' the life of St. Benedict in the second book of St. Gregory's *Dialogues*.¹¹ Yet

¹ ii. 317-22; 500-505.

² July-Sept. 1940, pp. 236-62.

³ Add. MS 5813, fo. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fo. 29.

⁵ Particularly 'which' for 'wch'; 'said' for 'sd'; 'could' for 'cd': some less common abbreviations have been retained, together with the original capitals and punctuation.

⁶ Brit. Mus. Add. MS 5820, printed in J. Guest, *Historic Notices of Rotherham*, pp. 88-98.

⁷ *Infra*, p. 126.

⁸ *Infra*, p. 125.

⁹ *Infra*, p. 126. On the College and its schools see *infra*, pp. 126-7.

¹⁰ *Infra*, p. 139.

¹¹ *Infra*, p. 94.

this last clue leads nowhere, since the sole early printed English translation of the *Dialogues* was that of the Catholic Philip Woodwarde,¹ whose life, connections and style differ completely from those of our Yorkshire author. Indeed, the latter makes no suggestion that his own version was ever printed.

Once we abandon the suggestion that the author was a Roman Catholic—a notion discouraged by many features of the text—it seems not particularly difficult to establish his identity. The exacting qualifications imposed by our evidence are adequately fulfilled by a certain Elizabethan Anglican cleric concerning whom we happen to know a good deal; he also proceeds to satisfy other demands which will shortly arise. The single discrepancy, that his name was not Cuthbert but *Michael* Sherbrook, need occasion no very violent misgivings, since William Cole's friend might easily have been misinformed as to the Christian name. About 1530 there lived in fact a young cleric named Cuthbert Sherbrook in the diocese of York,² yet no other evidence connects him with our treatise, while the date virtually excludes him from writing in the 1590's, when, as will appear, our treatise was finished. On the other hand, the case for Michael Sherbrook is strong. He was born in 1535, ordained priest about 1563³ and instituted on 2 February 1567 to the rectory of Wickersley on the presentation of Mr. Francis Leake.⁴ Wickersley lies on the precise spot required, between three and four miles east of Rotherham and five miles west of Roche Abbey. In 1575 he was examined along with other local clergy by John Mey, archdeacon of the East Riding,⁵ who reported that Sherbrook was forty years of age, had been a priest for twelve years, had a moderate knowledge of Latin, was not yet married, but intended to be shortly. The examiner also records that Sherbrook professed the gospel (i.e. adhered to the forms of religion prescribed by law), that he taught the catechism diligently, likewise kept his register, was hospitable so far as his means allowed, and 'detected' nobody of offences against the law.⁶ Yet our manuscript shows that beneath this highly inoffensive exterior there lay something not uncommon in the annals of the English rural clergy—a thoughtful, opinionated, and rather cranky mind.

Whatever his views, Michael Sherbrook occupied the rectory of Wickersley for about 43 years, an exceptional tenure which

¹ Paris, 1608; dedicated to Anne of Denmark.

² So far, I know nothing of Cuthbert Sherbrook, except that in a volume of court-notes c.1536, he is described as *scholaris* and receives letters dimissory.

³ These dates derive from the examination of 1575, described *infra*.

⁴ J. Hunter, *South Yorkshire*, i. 279.

⁵ Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (ed. Hardy), iii. 143; Mey became bishop of Carlisle in 1577.

⁶ York Diocesan Registry, clergy examinations printed in J. S. Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York*, p. 122. For the conjectural 'Worsley', read Wickersley.

strengthens his claim to authorship, since it explains the curiously long period over which the treatise lingered in course of compilation. His terminal date appears from an entry in a diocesan act book to the effect that on 5 October 1610 Daniel Bainbrig was admitted to the rectory of Wickersley, vacant by death of the last incumbent, Michael Sherbrook.¹ The probability that parson Sherbrook wrote our treatise seems further strengthened in whatever direction our enquiries proceed. Scores of passages make it obvious, for example, that the writer was a priest. But our knowledge of the names of beneficed Tudor clergy in the York diocese is nowadays both voluminous and well organised: we should almost certainly know something of any other clerical Sherbrook had such a person held a living in this locality over any considerable period. Likewise, though at least one sixteenth century family of the name occurs in Nottinghamshire and in connection with West Riding lands,² its records contain no names to place alongside that of the long-lived rector of Wickersley. At this stage too, it seems desirable to dispose of Thomas Porter's suggestion that the author was a Roman Catholic. The notion is far from unintelligible, since we find here a strong defence of English monastic life, and an assertion of its beneficent effects upon society, which pass far beyond the skilful but more guarded case argued in earlier years by Robert Aske.³ Again, we observe a strongly-worded condemnation of blindness and greed among 'the Protestants', some hostile references to the 'seditious' Puritans,⁴ a marked dislike for the propagandist elements in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*,⁵ and certain references to the Papacy which might be construed as tolerant and even respectful. On the other hand, many passages of the treatise would come even more strangely from the pen of a Romanist than from that of an Anglican. Several times he speaks irreverently of the Pope;⁶ he disbelieves in purgatory⁷ and he uses offensive expressions concerning the sacrament of the altar.⁸ He calls attention to the need for bishoprics and for 'good Parsons' in the Elizabethan church.⁹ He is a socially-minded clergyman whose concern for the poor seems often to outrun his ecclesiastical loyalties: at times he appears almost to dissociate himself from all the warring denominations. 'For as the Protestants', he writes, 'were raised up by the sufferance of God out and from the Papists even so hath the Puritans risen from amongst the Protestants.'¹⁰ To counter these contentions, the voluminous records concerning Yorkshire Romanist recusants would need to produce a rival candidate even closer to the specifications than Michael

¹ Act Book B, fo. 408 v.

² *Y.A.S. Rec. Ser.*, vii. 47; xxviii. 104; cf. pedigree in *Harleian Soc.*, iv. 132.

³ *E.H.R.*, v. 561-2.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 92.

⁷ *Infra*, pp. 131-2.

⁹ *Infra*, p. 137.

⁴ *Infra*, pp. 136-7.

⁶ *Infra*, pp. 111-12, 115.

⁸ *Infra*, pp. 141-2.

¹⁰ *Infra*, p. 136.

Sherbrook, and this, so far as I can observe, they fail to do.¹

When was the treatise actually composed by Sherbrook? Here again, clues are obvious, yet they soon involve complexities. On fo. 7 the writer mentions a papal decree 'made in the year of our Lord God 222, which is above 1345 years ago.'² A simple addition thus yields 1567 as the date of composition, a date with which all allusions appear consistent at least as far as fo. 20 *verso*. Here is a reference which might possibly be taken to suggest a somewhat later date.³ Then on fo. 22 we find a clear reference to the parliamentary Act concerning cottages, passed in 1589.⁴ On fos. 23v-24 the author makes jocular reference to the heavy fine imposed by the penal statute of 1581.⁵ On fo. 25 comes the very precise statement: 'For there be for one beggar in the first year of King Henry 8 at this day in the 33 year of her Majestie, an hundred.' And this claim Sherbrook proceeds to illustrate by describing the vast concourse of beggars at the funeral of George Earl of Shrewsbury, which spectacular event took place at Sheffield on 13 January 1591.⁶ Now since the year 33 Elizabeth ended on 16 November 1591, the composition of this passage (and possibly of the whole section between fo. 22 and the end of the treatise on fo. 29) may be placed within the year 1591. Yet this dating by no means constrains us to throw doubt upon the date 1567 assigned by Sherbrook himself to the early section of the work. There is no intrinsic improbability in the notion that a priest who held a benefice for 43 years should, after a lapse of 24 years, pick up an old manuscript and add to it several pages justifying his views by reference to recent experience. Sherbrook's older neighbour Robert Parkyn compiled the most remarkable of his manuscript books—though this was admittedly a miscellany—over a similar period earlier in the century.⁷ Likewise Ralph Rokeby, secretary to the Queen's Council in the North, wrote his family history *Æconomia Rokebiorum* in 1565 and revised it in 1593.⁸ While 1567 and 1591 may thus reasonably enough be taken as the terminal dates of Sherbrook's manuscript, it cannot be inferred that the whole was necessarily written in two brief spurts of activity in those years. Some of the central portions, though difficult to date with certainty, suggest by their indecisive planning that the work had been laid

¹ Recusancy was not very important in this part of Yorkshire. In 1604, e.g., the parish of Wickersley reported that it had not a single recusant or non-communicant (*A List of the Roman Catholics in the County of York*, ed. E. Peacock, p. 4).

² *Infra*, p. 93.

³ He refers (*infra*, p. 125) to a conversation thirty years after the dissolution of Roche (i.e. in 1569).

⁴ 31 Eliz. cap. 7; *infra*, p. 129.

⁵ 23 Eliz. cap. 1; *infra*, p. 132.

⁶ Cf. *infra*, p. 135.

⁷ Bodleian MS Lat. th. d. 15, described in *E.H.R.*, lxii. 58 *seqq.*, and more briefly, *supra*, pp. 18-19.

⁸ T. D. Whitaker, *Richmondshire*, i. 158.

aside for a time, then recommenced from a slightly different angle. By fo. 14, for example, the writer has reached on a chronological basis the execution of Thomas Cromwell (1540), but after a page of generalities, he reverts to the Submission of the Clergy (1532) and retraces the thirties, but now with special reference to the terms of the Reformation statutes. The resultant diffuse and untidy impression is not uncharacteristic of many Tudor provincial writers, men of small facility, who found writing rather laborious, often spoke of themselves as 'compilers', and felt reluctant to undertake the additional labour of pruning and rewriting. At the same time, readers of his treatise will not deny Sherbrook a certain talent lacking in many of his ecclesiastical contemporaries. While, as in the first pages, he can be intolerably slow-moving, he develops at his best a quite racy and readable style, with many trenchant and sardonic turns of phrase. Distinctly less praise is likely to be accorded his historical sense and knowledge.

Sherbrook had two main purposes: to justify the monasteries and to expose the selfishness and the social evils attendant upon their dissolution. In the process he wrote many vigorous and striking paragraphs which Dr. Gasquet seized upon as 'contemporary' backing for his own view of the Reformation. In so doing he was no doubt inspired by incautious enthusiasm rather than by deliberately unjust principles of selection, yet it is fair to add that his incaution did not lead him to mention paragraphs wherein Sherbrook wrote ludicrous and palpable nonsense. It is indeed essential to recall, while reading the earlier portions of our treatise, that Sherbrook was in no real sense a contemporary of the monasteries, but a mere child of four at the time of their dissolution. Anyone who has read the Norwich¹ or the Lincoln episcopal visitations² knows immensely more than he concerning the disciplinary problems of late medieval monasticism. Anyone who still credits the ideal picture may be left to read the sympathetic but fair summary of the visitational material recently made by Fr. Philip Hughes.³ And whatever Sherbrook may in his innocence have imagined, monasteries often enclosed land, sometimes depopulating it, sometimes depriving tenants of their rights of common.⁴ Even Sir Thomas More places 'certain abbotts, holy men no doubt'⁵ amongst the enclosing landlords, and he can certainly be supported from record

¹ *Camden Soc., new ser.*, xliii, ed. A. Jessopp.

² *Lincoln Record Soc.*, xxxiii, xxxv, xxxvii, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson.

³ *The Reformation in England*, i. 48 *seqq.*

⁴ Monasteries are frequently accused of such enclosure by Wolsey's commissioners of 1517 (*The Domesday of Enclosures*, ed. Leadam, *passim*). In no particular case, clerical or lay, can these accusations be assumed true (cf. E. Kerridge in *E.H.R.*, lxx. 212 *seqq.*), but see e.g. also *Select Cases in the Star Chamber*, ii (*Selden Soc.*, xxv), pp. xcii *seqq.* and *Chron. Butley Priory*, pp. 16, 50.

⁵ *Utopia*, (Pitt Press edn.), p. 31.

sources. In general the monasteries were not, and could not afford to be, the economic quixotes depicted by our author. They had always been tenacious litigants in the maintenance and extension of their properties and privileges; how tenacious an earlier volume in this present series admirably illustrates.¹ Monastic rents appear to have been as high as those of contemporary lay lords,² and altogether there seems no reason to think of late monastic landlordism as unworldly; in any case it must commonly have been directed by those of the gentry who acted as paid stewards and understewards for religious houses. Most houses were in debt and could not afford rash generosity; had they survived into the years of heavy inflation, they would doubtless have been compelled to raise rents and fines in the manner of lay lords, or else succumb. Again, while Sherbrook was right in praising the traditional hospitality certainly shown by many houses to all sorts and conditions of men, he was wrong in supposing that monks played an important rôle in popular education, and that they had continued until recent times to write and illuminate manuscripts.³

Whence did he derive his more romantic notions? Not, apparently, from the reports of older contemporaries with opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge, since the only two stories he ascribes to such sources have a brutal realism belonging to the real world and in striking contrast with the rest. One of these is the dialogue between his uncle and the monk of Roche who tried at the dissolution to sell the uncle his cell door for two pence, making the claim that the monks had been given their cells.⁴ The other relates to the attitude of Sherbrook's own father who, with his partners, had bought the timber of the steeple of Roche, including the bell-frame. In later years Sherbrook asked him why he was so ready to destroy a house of which he thought well, and he received the reply of a hard-headed Yorkshireman: 'What should I do? Might I not as well as others have some profit of the spoil of the Abbey? For I did see all would away; and therefore I did as others did.'⁵ When we look elsewhere, it is easy enough to perceive that Sherbrook's idealisation derived not from direct reports but from books describing the remote and heroic phases of monastic history. Early in the work he lists some of them: the *Polychronicon*, the fifteenth century chronicler Fabyan, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, St. Gregory's *Dialogues* and St. Jerome.⁶ These, it must be conceded, form anything but a relevant set of sources upon which to base a defence of late English monasticism against the Reformers.

¹ *Monastic Chancery Proceedings* (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser., lxxxviii), ed. J. S. Purvis; cf. his significant figures on pp. iv-v.

² Leadam, *op. cit.*, i. 64-5.

³ Cf. especially, for Sherbrook's idealised picture, *infra*, pp. 94-98.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 123.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 125.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 92.

While making not a little parade of the 'evidence', Sherbrook seems almost totally devoid of period-sense. It does not occur to him to doubt the literal authenticity of Gregory's Benedictine stories, or even to question their applicability to the later history of monasticism. Introducing Wolsey as the scourge of the clergy, he relates that the latter had become 'both stout and proud and replenished with other vice, as it appeareth by the chronicles and histories of England, and specially in the 6th Book of the Policronicon in the 24 chapter; and in the 7th book and 6 chapter, to the great offence of Almighty God.'¹ Dutifully turning up these chapters, we find that one concerns the ignorance and pride of Archbishop Stigand (d. 1072) and the other the hunting and hawking of the monks of Canterbury in the time of Lanfranc! In another passage he urges that the monks did all sorts of good works and maintained strict discipline, 'as it appeareth by the godly rules of the blessed father and abbot St. Benedict';² a type of inference in which he has been followed by modern historians who should have known better.

Of the Tudor historians, Sherbrook had read Foxe, whose bigotry against monasticism he quite justly censures,³ and Hall, whom he cites as indicating that Henry spent the monastic spoils on riotous banquetting and display.⁴ This latter was an erroneous but perhaps not unnatural deduction in view of the space devoted to such festive themes by Hall. By far the most important source utilised by Sherbrook in his account of the Reformation—during which he often strays well outside his monastic subject—was the text of the parliamentary statutes, available to him in many printed editions.⁵ This obviously careful study of the statute-book was evidently not rare amongst the clergy and the small educated minority of the laity, for their wills not infrequently mention such collections of statutes. On the other hand, I see no certain evidence that Sherbrook made use of the many social and economic pamphleteers of the mid-Tudor age. On the broad outcome of that age, his comments are uniformly partisan and often highly imperceptive. His mind was too full of the greed and hypocrisy, which admittedly marked many of the beneficiaries from the dissolution, to allow him to see the reverse of the fabric: either the disinterested elements of early Protestantism or the constructive achievements of the Tudor dynasty. His remarkable incomprehension of Tudor political and social aims is well exemplified by his plea that the monastic lands should have been handed back to the ancient noble families which had founded the monasteries, rather than shared among a host of newer and lesser men.⁶ And needless to add, one who idealised pre-Tudor times and lacked any sense of the chaos which had

¹ *Infra*, p. 101.

² *Infra*, p. 94.

³ *Infra*, p. 92.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 138.

⁵ Cf. W. H. Maxwell, *Bibliography of English Law to 1650*, i. 349-59.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 108.

seized fifteenth century England was in no state to grasp the new ideals or to appreciate the great work of administrative reform, the conditioning of Englishmen into law-abiding citizens, inaugurated by Henry VII and by Thomas Cromwell.

This is no place to embark upon a full-fledged discussion concerning Sherbrook's other polemical thesis. This is the notion, beloved of later religious partisans and social doctrinaires, that the dissolution of the monasteries constituted a great economic disaster for the common Englishman. Since, however, the thesis survives in a few books still praised and read, a few words of caution are necessary in relation to Sherbrook, who was one of the originators of this thesis.

In the first place, no reliance whatever should be placed upon any of his statistics regarding the wealth of the monasteries and of the Church as a whole. Like most of his other sources, they are medieval in character—and wild even for medieval statistics. He alleges that there were 10,000 abbeys in England and that by the Dissolution a yearly revenue of £4,970,000 must have come into the King's hands.¹ The latter estimate he subsequently claims to be based upon that of the Lollard parliamentary Bill under Henry IV, but his figure bears no relation to the figures given by Fabyan, his only possible source.² Actually, including all types of foundations (apart from cells) there were about 800 houses of religious in England during the early sixteenth century,³ while the gross total income of the 553 houses dealt with by Dr. Savine works out at £161,853 annually.⁴ Likewise in considering the wealth of the clergy as a whole, Sherbrook states that they held 2,815 knights' fees, a figure which one may assumed to be his or his copyist's error for the 28,015 of the *Polychronicon*. This latter estimate is itself admittedly rash and arbitrary.⁵ Sherbrook again writes that the religious houses must have had 30,000 parsonages impropriated, and each worth £20 on the average, since there were in England, even at the Conquest, 40,005 parish churches. The valuation £20 is, of course, too large for the third decade of the sixteenth century, while the total of 40,000 parishes is a common medieval monstrosity⁶ which curiously

¹ These two figures are given twice *infra*, pp. 99, 113.

² Fabyan (ed. Ellis, 1811, p. 575) gives an estimated total income of about 427,000 marks, which the Lollards in 1410 urged the King to seize from a specified list of bishoprics and religious houses. John Sharpe's petition (Brit. Mus. Harleian MS 3775, fo. 120, printed in Amundesham, *Rolls Ser.*, i. 453-5) gives a similar list totalling 442,000 marks.

³ The comprehensive lists in J. Gairdner, *English Church in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 419-28, give 608 houses, to which should be added less than 200 friaries.

⁴ *English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution*, p. 100. Those omitted are mainly very poor houses.

⁵ Stubbs, *Constitutional Hist.*, i. 468n.

⁶ It was admitted in 1371 that instead of the 40,000 parishes, as originally estimated for the purpose of the parochial grant, there were only 9,000 (*ibid.*, ii. 442-3).

survived in more authoritative opinions until at least 1546.¹ Sherbrook's contemporary Camden comes certainly close to the truth in his calculation (by dioceses) totalling 9,284 parishes.² We may conclude with safety that large figures meant as little to the Elizabethan Sherbrook as to his medieval forbears. However interesting his work may be as an early attempt at the statistical method, his statistics themselves remain mere adaptations from fanciful medieval authors. What are we then to think of Sherbrook's views regarding the economic effects of the dissolution and of the Reformation generally?

The answer to this question has in part already been suggested. Monastic estates did not constitute an economic Elysium; had they survived they could not radically have diverged from the normal policies of the period in order to provide specially favourable conditions for their tenants. Altogether, the preachers and pamphleteers (nearly all of them Protestants) who so vociferously deplore covetous landlordism in the period succeeding the dissolution seem in general to have been accorded more than their due weight.³ Their statistics are not infrequently as absurd as those of Sherbrook himself,⁴ and they had no inkling as to the true causes and implications of the currency-inflation which we now see as a dominant feature of mid-Tudor economic life. When the influx of Peruvian silver into Europe was doubling and trebling commodity-prices, when tenant-farmers were thus prospering mightily, with how much justice can we denounce as covetous the landlords who raised fines and rents? If it can clearly be demonstrated that the profits of landlords rose faster than prices, then the outcries of the pamphleteers will begin to develop substance, and we shall be able both to moralise at their expense and to think of genuine rack-renting as a common reality. Such a thesis has not yet been proved, and it seems unlikely to be proved, at least in relation to the mid-Tudor and earlier Elizabethan periods. And awkwardly enough, the dissolution-years inaugurate the classic period of the English yeoman farmer! Likewise, there can be little doubt that Sherbrook follows the fashion by exaggerating the impact of enclosures,⁵ which were an immensely complex phenomenon, affected adversely only a limited proportion of Tudor England, and in any case had formed a

¹ In 1529 Simon Fish, in the course of an estimate of the friars' income closely comparable with Sherbrook's statistical methods, gives the figure as 52,000 (*Supplicacyon for the Beggars*, E.E.T.S., Extra Ser., xiii. 2-3). The French ambassador Odet de Selve (*Correspondance Politique*, 1546-9, p. 64) gives 40,000 as still the common estimate when in 1546 it was proposed to raise a man from each parish for the Scots campaign.

² *Britannia* (edn. 1753), i, p. ccxxx.

³ And, for that matter, by the present writer twenty years ago: cf. *Church Quarterly Review*, July-Sept. 1940, p. 256.

⁴ See e.g. J. D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors*, p. 457.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 129.

recognized governmental problem long before the dissolution of the monasteries.¹ Sherbrook himself is understandably uneasy about the objections which will be raised against his emphasis upon enclosures, and has to admit that there are still shires in which 'all their grounds are common arable fields', or where 'there is many wast grounds that this day lieth forth'.²

Whatever our view as to the character of post-monastic landlordism, it has little relevance to Sherbrook's thesis about the fatal effects of the dissolution—unless we maintain that monks were exceptionally easygoing landlords, and could so have continued in the event of their survival. Inevitably amid the discontents of the post-monastic period, there were some social thinkers who began to idealise the old days. But a striking fact about the literary evidence of the period is the lack of emphasis which it places upon the dissolution as a source of poverty.³ Of the generation before Sherbrook, very few of the writers can be regarded as serious economic analysts. The author of the *Discourse of the Common Weal*, perhaps the profoundest of these few, specifically denies that the transfer of lands was a major cause of dearth and distress.⁴ Though, like the rest of his contemporaries, he did not fully understand the inflation, he rightly argues that no one cause but a great complex of causes underlay the problems of his age. Sherbrook himself, it is true, finds other sources of poverty beyond the dissolution, but here again, his essentially ideological approach shows itself in his exaggerated emphasis upon the notion that the marriage of the clergy has too swiftly increased the numbers of consumers.⁵ Had he only kept his mind off ecclesiastical matters, he might here have made a significant point. It seems likely that the Elizabethan period witnessed—for other reasons, such as its relative freedom from major deadly epidemics—a fairly rapid population-growth, which increased the supply of cheap labour and depressed wages. Sherbrook's first-hand observations upon the noticeable increase of poor cottagers in each village⁶ has in this connection a clear relevance. It would indeed be unrealistic to brush aside the considerable evidence for low wages, rising prices, and a growing pauper or near-pauper element in Elizabethan society. Even so, contemporary observers showed a marked leaning toward pessimism in various forms,⁷ and their sensitivity toward social problems had certainly

¹ For a brief survey of the present state of knowledge see Joan Thirsk, *Tudor Enclosures* (Historical Association, 1959).

² *Infra*, p. 129.

³ I dealt with these writers more fully in *Church Quarterly Review*, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Ed. E. Lamond, p. 85.

⁵ *Infra*, pp. 132-3.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 129. The point is substantiated by W. G. Hoskins in *The Midland Peasant*, p. 171.

⁷ See e.g. E. K. Chambers, *The Disenchantment of the Elizabethans* in Sir Thomas Wyatt and Some Collected Studies, or again, F. P. Wilson, *Elizabethan and Jacobean*, ch. ii.

become greater than that of earlier generations. If the evidence at present available does not encourage complacency, neither does it compel us to accept the consistent pessimism exemplified by Sherbrook. Self-confessedly, he thought everything was going from bad to worse:¹ even the bad weather and low crop-yields were a direct reward for national sin.² Yet even within his chosen economic and social sphere, his age had its distinctly brighter sides; with increasing emphasis, modern research shows Sherbrook's contemporaries as immensely exceeding any previous generation in their expenditure upon education and upon the poor.³ Indeed, many of those contemporaries at least equally entitled to judge the situation did not accept the adverse balance-sheet presented by Sherbrook's accountancy. In his own walk of life, we find a curiously antithetical author in Francis Trigge, the Lincolnshire cleric and economist, whose *Apologie* (1589) deliberately undertook to prove that 'our dayes are more happie and blessed than the dayes of our forefathers.' Trigge had obviously met people who almost in Sherbrook's words glorified the good old days of the monasteries. He remarks that 'many do lament the pulling downe of abbayes, they say it was never merie world since: they highly commend their liberalitie to the poore: their curtesie to their tenants, their commoditie to the common wealth: their planting of woodes, their setting of trees.'⁴ As against this habit of praising the religious, Trigge first sets their 'pryde, idlenesse, fulnesse of breade, and unmercifulnesse. In so much that the fatnesse and haughtiness, and idlenesse of monkes, came into a proverbe amongst all men: in so much, that idle persons were called abbey lubbers: fatt men were saide to have abbots' faces.'⁵ He then more interestingly points out that, if the monks had been good landlords, there had existed in their time strong reasons for most lords to treat their tenants well.

'But the abbeyes were good to their tenants, they were good land lords. Well, suppose they were so: it is no curtesie which is by compulsion. . . . The landlords in those dayes were glad to seek ther tenants: yea, as I have heard to hyre them that should till their grounds and be their tenants. A good tenant was then hard to be found. Every man then kept that his father occupyed, and desired no more.' If the monks, and other landlords, sold goods cheaply and let out lands on easy terms, this was due not to any special benevolence, but to the fact that prices and rents were universally lower at that time.⁶ Sherbrook's views on both dissolution and general economic tendencies were hence not held by

¹ *Infra*, p. 130, l. 6.

² *Infra*, p. 130.

³ See in particular the weighty evidence adduced by W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660* (1959).

⁴ *Apologie*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

all Elizabethan observers: since Dr. Gasquet quoted Sherbrook, he should also have quoted that better-known contemporary economist, Francis Trigge.

Despite his lack of appreciation for the constructive achievements of his age and of the Tudor dynasty, despite his false statistics and his crude idealisation of the past, Sherbrook represents worthily enough the growing tradition of economic and social thought amongst the Elizabethan clergy, which brought many of them into a relationship with lay society more constructive than that enjoyed by their predecessors. Where he discusses contemporary fact as opposed to antiquarian theory, he bears valuable witness to some of the significant developments of his age. Amongst such passages one might single out his emphasis upon the great numerical increase of the country gentry,¹ a phenomenon genuinely accentuated by the widespread distribution of monastic lands. The heralds' visitations of Yorkshire show forcibly enough that the most significant aspect of the 'rise of the gentry' was their multiplication. And that this phenomenon was at least accentuated by the widespread distribution of the monastic lands, there seems every reason to believe. Dr. Youings has recently demonstrated the great number of small and moderate-sized purchasers who in Devon entered into the inheritance of the monks,² and future research will doubtless extend some such picture at least to the greater part of England. While Sherbrook testifies accurately to this fact, he would seem to wrong such 'new' people in regarding them as mere upstarts, for most of them were younger sons or belonged to junior branches of established gentle families. Anxious to rise in the estimation of the county, they had every possible incentive to avoid a breach with the decencies of a still conservative agrarian society. New social problems replaced the old ones, yet only a narrow mind would be sure that, on balance, the advantages lay with the past. In suggesting that the monastic lands should have been given to the older nobility and the bishops,³ Sherbrook sought in effect to put back the clock to the sterile and chaotic fifteenth century, rather than forward to the seventeenth, which, with all its shortcomings, was to leave England a splendid heritage of constitutional freedom, of cultural achievement, of economic growth and of geographical expansion.

Despite such intellectual limitations, Sherbrook's treatise deserves to be printed as an Elizabethan document: this it demands quite apart from the many local references and implications which invest it with a special interest for Yorkshire historians. Sherbrook was not, as some have supposed, a witness speaking to us from the

¹ *Infra*, p. 128.

² *Devon Monastic Lands: Calendar of Particulars for Grants*, ed. J. Youings (*Devon and Cornwall Record Soc.*, new ser. i).

³ *Infra*, p. 108.

monastic past. He was a medievalist, not a survivor from the middle ages. Yet these very facts confer upon him a certain significance because they place him at the beginning, not at the end of a tradition. He forms one of our earliest examples of a new way of thinking about the middle ages, a period toward which he looked back across an already deep gulf of change. In his day he had at least one northern parallel in the anonymous author of the *Rites of Durham*,¹ who about 1593 compiled this vivid, idealised, attractive account of the daily life, customs and ceremonies of the monastic cathedral. Yet despite a close similarity between his outlook and that of Sherbrook, the Durham man derived much of his factual material from the recollections of his own very distant youth. While his approach and even his phraseology show striking resemblances to Sherbrook's, his interests are much more narrowly antiquarian and liturgical. Both these men might well be regarded as forerunners of Sir Henry Spelman, who began to work on monasticism and sacrilege in a not dissimilar spirit about the time of Sherbrook's death. They join the company of Elizabethan antiquaries, humble relatives of Camden and humble precursors of the tradition which culminated in Dugdale, Willis and the great monastic antiquaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And if our crotchety Michael Sherbrook throws little light upon the last days of the monasteries, he says something about the monastic tradition which badly needed saying in an age too heavily dominated by the prejudices of John Foxe. Like his great successors, he consciously explored the achievement of the religious orders as an aspect of Christian history, and with true Yorkshire independence refused to allow a fashionable disdain to obscure the contributions of monasticism to the advancement of Christian civilisation.

¹ Ed. J. T. Fowler in *Surtees Soc.*, cvii. On this treatise see also D. M. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, iii. 129-37.

SIR FRANCIS BIGOD

[TITLE PAGE]

A TREATISE CONCERNYNGE
IMPROPRIATIONS OF BENEFICES

Cum privilegio regali

THE PREFACE

To the kyng our most gracyous soverayne lorde. Frauncys Bygod knyght, his humble and true faythfull subiect, and dayly oratour, wissheth dayly augmentatyon and encrease of grace and honoure.

I¹ dyd nat perfyttly know (most gracyouse, moste christen, and most vycorious prince) how that amonge all other vertues, that the vertuous gyftes gyven by grace onely, throughe the goodnesse of almighty god, of the incomparable gyfte of gentelnesse and humanyte, dyd so habundantly, accumulately, and so manifestly possesse and reygne in your noble and princely herte, tyll that nowe it appereth manifestly by your exteryour noble actes and dedes, for els undoubtedly I wold nat only have ben ashamed [A. ii.] so to attempte rudely, folysshly, and rather presumptuouslye to trouble & disquyet such an imperyall maiesty with this my rude & barbarouse writynge, in the hynderaunce of youre godly & spirituall studies, with whiche your highnesse taketh such intollerable payne: as well to set forth the mere, syncere, & trewe glorie of god, as also thestablysshment, quietnesse and unyte of this youre christen comen welth. But also in myne owne conceyte & opinyon, callynge to remembrance my greate & manyfolde insuffycyency in lernynge, to write unto so mighty & famouse a prince, I shulde even by & by have dysalowed myne owne behavyoure in that behalfe, & iuged my selfe worthy

¹ With a large ornamental initial.

of blame. But nowe consyderinge most benigne sovereygne lorde, how moche all your subiectes be imperpetually bounde to laude, praise, & glorify almighty god, to sende unto us so christen a kinge to have rule & governaunce over us your subiectes, by whose great & inestymable dilygente labour, charge, studye & payne, we be delyvered from the harde, sharpe, & x.M.¹ tymes more than iudicyall captivytie of that babylonycall man of Rome, to the swete & softe servyce, ye,² rather lyberty of the gospel, I can for my part no lesse do, than to present to your grace some thinge therby to declare how gladly I wolde gyve thankses to your hyghnesse, for such profet as I amonge others have received by this sayd benefite in our delyveraunce, which acte is of itselfe so hyghly to the gret peace, unyte, & welth of this most noble empyre of Englande,³ that if there wer non other cause but that onely, we were bounde to, & with all our dilygence & industry, to studye, labour, & devyse howe this benefyte excedyng all other, mighte worlde without ende be extolled, praised, & made immortall, and to receyte how moch the furthuraunce of goddes glori is by the same acte set forthe & advaunced, my lernynge ne yet wytte wyll nat serve me. Yet I dare boldly afferme, pondering & consydering depely, theeffecte & cyrcumstance of this mater. This acte is no lesse worthe than wel worthy to be sette in the boke of kinges of the olde testamente, as a thinge soundynge to goddes honoure, as moch as any other history therein conteyned.

But what shulde I attempte or go about to expresse the condygne & everlastynge prayses & thankses, which your maiesty hath deserved of all your hole cominalte⁴ for the benefytes before named, onlesse I wolde take in hande lyke an evyll workeman, whiche by reason of his unperfeytnesse in his scyence, shuld utterly stayne & deface the thinge, he wolde most earnestly & dilygently shew and set forth. I wyll therefore most excellent emperour of this realme, set all this asyde & shewe to your grace the cause of my enterprise, for somoche as I perceyve that all your gracyouse procedynges ar only driven & conveyed to the most high, iust, & syncere honour of almighty god, the publyke welth & unity of all christendome[,] most specially of this your most noble realme of Englande, it hath animated and encouraged me, accordinge to the small talent of lerninge that the lorde hath lente to me, to put your grace in remembran[c]e of the intollerable pestilence of impropriations of benefices to relygyouse persones (as they wyll be called) some to men & some to women, whiche in myne opinion is a thinge playnly repugnant to the most holy & blessed decrees & ordynaunces of

¹ Ten thousand.

² Yea.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 42, n. 3; cf. 'emperour', *infra*, and 'imperial maiesty', *infra*, p. 43.

⁴ A frequent form of 'commonalty', meaning here the whole nation.

allmighty god, & highly to the extollinge, supportinge, & mayntenance of the usurped power of the bysshop of Rome, as your maiesty shall perceyve in reding of this lytell treatyse, whiche your grace nat beyng offended, I shall ever (god wyllnge) be able iustly to defende, & also stop the mouthes of them that shall say & abyde by the contrary and that nat with myne owne wordes but with auctorities of holy scripture.

And further I do moste humbly upon both my knees beseche your imperyal maiesty, that unto such tyme as this my lytel boke be clerely confuted bi lyke holy scrypture & auctorities, as I have approved¹ the same, that it may safely go abroad under protection of your moste gracyouse and redouted name. And for the prosperouse preservation of your most royalle state of your mooste noble and vertuouse Quene, of your dere doughter lady princesse,² doughter and heyre to you both (accordyng to my most bounde dutye) I shall dayly pray, my lyfe enduryng.

Finis.

To³ recyte in one volume good christen reder, all the papisticall captivite, seductyon, and disceyte, wherwith manye yeres the kynges trewe and louvyng subiectes of this his most noble realme of Englande, pytuously have ben deluded, begyled, and blynded: It shulde (I thynke) nat onely even abhorre the eares of all them that ben good and vertuouse, but also be a laboure and burdeyne to⁴ great and strange, for the lernynge of him that hath no more than I. Yea, & though my lerninge were a great dele more passynge than it is, and myne eloquence as good as ever was Demosthenes, yet all were one. Excepte it be possyble, and any thinge lykely for a thinge that is infynite to be comprehended of that that is fynite.

Therefore for this tyme overpassinge [B.] so many thinges withoute ende and reason, that is, to detecte the fraudes and gyles of the foresayde pastystes,⁵ both all and some, which is nat possyble.⁶ I shall be contente at this tyme to saye my mynde in one thyng partyculer, wherof hytherto no man that I knowe hath any thinge sayde or written, for a reformatyon to be had in the abuse therof. My meninge is of the craftye iuggelynge, cleane conveyance, & lewde legerdemayn used amongst some men (ye knowe whome I meane⁷) concernynge the impropriatyons of benefices.⁸ Of all pestylent infections that ever invaded outhur realme or regyon, the

¹ Proved.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 9 and *infra*, p. 58.

³ With a large ornamental initial.

⁴ Too.

⁵ *Sic* for 'papystes'.

⁶ Modern punctuation would, of course, substitute a comma.

⁷ I.e. religious persons. In view of his subsequent overt attack, this pretence of mystery can only be a literary device, perhaps intended to add force to the later revelations.

⁸ Substitute a comma.

moost pernycyouse and dyemeterly¹ repugnaunte agaynst the blessed ordynaunce of almighty god. Here nowe to boste (as some man wolde that were a ioyly papyst) that I am suffyciente to confounde & convyne all them that wolde withstande me in this one argumente and cause, in dyspyte of all their subtyll sophistry and nyghe scraped scriptures, wrested out of frame,² it shall nat moche nede, for my mynde is with no man to contende or stryve either moch or lytell: But playnly I entende to utter my conscience without either payntyng or colouryng, sophismes, or sophystrye, & after to leve the mater to the iugemente of them that ben in authoritye, and maye, whan it shall lyke them well set a redresse, nat onely in this, but also in all other abuses nat to be suffred. Neither do I moche regarde the blynde reasons and carnall persuatyons, that maye be broughte for the defence of their feble foundation, wherwith heretofore they have allured the nobles of this realme, to impropriate (as they call it) unto theym suche benefyces: for [B.ii.] truthe shall at length overcome all their falshed. Truth maye well be blamed, but it can never be shamed. Suche is the excellency and vertue of truth. For asmoch than as the cause of itselfe is so heynouse, that it can with no consyence any longer be suffered of any Christen stomake, but that it oughte to be reclaymed at,³ of all well mynded people, bothe with hert and soule. And for as moche as the truthe standeth with me, both of good scripture & reason, that these impropriatyons be false and abhominable in the syght of god, as my iugement serveth me, me thynketh I may right well without any suspect⁴ of temerytie, or any other evyll affectyon, entre into the mater, whiche I entende and purpose.

I thynke no man to be so blynde, but he knoweth that almighty god hath ordeyned in his faythful congregation of christen people, one specyall kynde of ministers, which are bounden afore thadministratyon of all sacramentes, chefely and princypally to applye them selfe to the syncere declaratyon and publysshynge of his most holy worde and gossell[,] this wytnessinge Paul by these wordes: Non enim misit me deus ut baptizarem, sed ut evangelizem.⁵ Et alibi. Ve mihi si non evangelizem.⁶ The lorde (saith he) hath nat sent me to baptyse, but rather to preache.⁷ Yea, wo be to me (saythe he in another place) if I do nat preche.⁸ But what nede me

¹ Diametrically. This form occurs also in Florio, 1603 (*N.E.D.*, s.v. diameterly).

² I.e. scraped together with great difficulty and distorted out of context.

³ Protested against (*N.E.D.* s.v. reclaim, 7).

⁴ Suspicion; a common form between Chaucer and the mid-seventeenth century (*N.E.D.*, s.v. suspect).

⁵ I Cor. i. 17. Bigod translates all these texts immediately *infra*. Cf. on his translations, *supra*, p. 16.

⁶ I Cor. ix. 16.

⁷ Tyndale has 'For Christ sent me not to baptyse, but to preache the gossell.'

⁸ Tyndale: 'Wo is it unto me yf I preache not the gossell.'

to prove that men be bounde to preche, whan no man denyeth it? The thinge that we entende to prove, is to prove that impropriatyons are nat to be suffred, no, nat of a Turke, if he wyll have his relygyon & lawe to contynewe and florisse. How moche lesse than are they nat to be promytted¹ of a christen man?² Thauctour of whose relygion is nother the pope nor Machomet, nor yet any man, but even the lyving god, the god of all goddes, and the creatour of heven and erth. Nowe if ye graunte me that men be bounde to laboure in the vyneyard of the lorde, and in the worke of his gospell.³ I trowe & beleve that it were nat moche agaynst good reason, that a good workeman, and he that laboureth iustly for his lyvyng, had as he is worthy, and as reason and scripture wyll, a rewarde worthy, and accordynge to his laboure. For the scrypture sayth: Dignus est mercenarius mercede sua.⁴ A true work man is worthy to have for his worke.⁵ And I am sure that the Turke for very shame could nat deny this. But let us se more of the scrypture. Paule sayth: Si nos vobis spiritualia seminavimus, magnum est si carnalia vestra metamus.⁶ That is: If we do minister unto you those thynges that ben hevenly and spiritual do you thynke it a high thinge if we reape and receyve of you agayne those that ben but worldly and transytorie thynges?⁷ And in another place: Quis suis stipendiis militat unquam? Quis plantat vineam, et de fructu eius non edit? Quis pascit gregem, et de lacte gregis non manducat?⁸ This is: who goth a warrefare any tyme at his owne proper charge? Who planteth a vyneyard and eteth nat of the fruite? Who fedeth a flocke and eteth nat of the mylke?⁹

Se you nat here how vehemente Paule is, in this that he wolde have the precher to be honestly founde? Yea, and to thentent that all the world may understande how fervent he is in this matter: Marke also how he bringeth in the olde law for him, as who shulde saye: If ye were, or be so unreasonable to deny these authorities and reasons, that I have here adduced & brought in, as thynges

¹ *Sic*, fully spelt, but meaning permit. Promit is normally a form of promise, but there are other examples of this erroneous usage (*N.E.D.*, s.v. promit, 2).

² Here and elsewhere, sentences involving an initial question are thus broken.

³ Substitute a comma.

⁴ I Tim. v. 18; cf. Matt. x. 10. *Recte*, *operarius*, which Bigod gives *infra*, p. 50.

⁵ He later (p. 50) translates it, 'have his rewarde for his payne.' Tyndale has, 'And the labourer is worthy of his rewarde.'

⁶ I Cor. ix. 11.

⁷ Tyndale: 'Yf we sowe unto you spirituall thynges: is it a greate thyng yf we reepe youre carnall thynges'.

⁸ I Cor. ix. 7.

⁹ Tyndale: 'who goeth a warfare eny tyme at his awne cost? Who planteth a vynearde and eateth not of the frute? Who fedeth a flocke and eateth not of the mylke?'

invented of myne owne braynes, & as a new founde holyday, devysed without authourite or counsell[,] yet I trowe you neither wyll or can denye, but that longe and many thousande yeres before I was borne, or you either, it was well and substancyallye provyded of god almighty for his ministers and servauntes, whiche laboured, or were otherwyse occupied at his commaundment in his holy temple. Therefore (saith Paul) marke what the scripture sayth: Nescitis quoniam hii qui in sacrario operant, que de sacrario sunt edunt &c.¹ Do ye not (sayth he) understande, how that they which minyster in the temple, have their fyndyng of the temple?² and that they whiche attende upon thaultare, are partetakers of the aultare? Even so (sayth Paul) doth the lorde ordeyne that they which preache the gospell, shulde lyve by the gospell. And yet Paule here in thadvouchyng of³ the olde ordynance of god, made in his olde testamente, enforceth nat to prove the payment of tythe, but all his dilygence is to iustifye his doctrine to be no newe lernyng,⁴ nor yet invented of his owne fantasy, but that in all tymes, and all ages, god wolde ever his ministers to be honestly systeyned and founde. Now this conformed, stablyshed and grounded, as I thinke it wyl be denyed of fewe or none.⁵ I besech you all my lordes ladyes, and maisters of impropriacions, what other thinges ben your impropriations than thinges directly fyghtyng agaynst goddes holy ordynaunce, agaynste his holy wyll, agaynste his most blessed pleasure, agaynst his holy spyrite? Fynally agaynst himselfe and all that is god. And consequently what can ye make of them, but thinges abhominable, thinges detestable, playne thefte and robberye. Yea, and more than twyse sacrylege.

I besech you what do you call them: yea, & howe moche are they to be hated, that ben but even prevy pykepurses? were he lesse worthy than to be set upon the pyllary? But what of him that robbeth a man even at noone in the kynges high waye, yea, even in the myddes of Poules church before all mennes eyes? Be nat you my maisters impropyators, suppose ye, even the same persones[?] If ye be and have ben so, ever syns you stale⁶ unto you these impropriations, what wolde you saye, or what shulde the governours say? Shuld theft be let alone[?] Shulde sacrylege be suffred? shulde pykyng be paynted?⁷ Yea, and at fewe wordes shuld murder be maintayned? But me thynketh I here you whysper that ye be no murtherers, theves, pykers, sacrylegians, nor yet none

¹ I Cor. ix. 13. *Recte*, 'Nescitis quoniam qui in sacrario operantur.'

² Tyndale: 'Do ye not understonde how that they which minister in the temple, have their fyndyng of the temple?'

³ Appealing to.

⁴ Bigod is doubtless aware of the pejorative sense in which the term New Learning was regarded by the opponents of that movement.

⁵ Substitute a comma.

⁶ *Sic*: i.e. stole.

⁷ I.e., should theft be glossed over?

of all this geare.¹ No ar nat? Well, than I se well we must have more to do with you.² For as moche as ye denye the cryme layde unto youre charge. Ye shall understande that good and vertuose men before our dayes, whiche loved the wyll of god, which loved his holy pleasure, whiche regarded his commaundement, whose medytatyons and studye both daye & nighte was, to set forth his glorie, to avaunce his blessed worde, and to maynteine the ministers of the same, dyd (no dout of it) with the consent of higher powers of kynges and of princes, and of their moste honourable counsels, folowyng (in this behalfe) the olde lawe, for the most easyest waye and spedyst provisyon, appoynt, assygne, and ordeyne (for the same ministers to be maynteyned) decymations³ or tythes, wyllynge and myndynge by this good provisyon, that within every congregation or parysshe, the minister of goddes worde there, shulde be sure at all tymes of a lyvyng, raysed and gathered of these sayde decymations, and therein to have added a certain name, callynge it a benefyce, personage, or vycarage, and lykewyse turnynge the name of a minister or curate, to the name of a persone or vycare. Furthermore orderynge that one man shall have authorite, as patrone, to name this parson, and so to gyve this same benefyce: albet, peradventure that other⁴ in the same parysshe gyve as moche to the annuall lyvyng of the parson as the patrone doth.

Besydes this, they ordeyned him a mantion to dwel in among them, to thentente that for his dilygente administration, he shulde have every thinge necessarye for him within his owne governance: yea, & have it brought even home unto him, to dyspose at his pleasure, as it shall be most expedyent and necessary for him, that the more quyetyly he mighte studye and applye himselfe to minister unto them the pure worde of god, and to be ever redy at hande to enstrute them of all thinges necessarye for the helth of their soules, and to be their trewe watch man and shepherde to take them from the ravysshyng wolfe, and lyke a good trew herdesman, a pastoure to go afore them in spirytual and vertuose conversation: and ever whan they be scabbed to anoynte them gently with the softe and swete salve of goddes worde, all rancoure & stryfe layde aparte. Nowe my maisters impropriated or improper maisters,⁵ howe saye ye by youre fathers, have nat you with your crafty collusyon, almoste throughe Englande, dystroyed these holy and godly provysions, made for the mayntenance of goddes holy word, and for thadministraryon of this most blessed sacramentes,⁶ for the helth,

¹ Common in the sense of doings, 'goings-on', usually in a depreciatory sense (*N.E.D.*, s.v. gear, 11).

² Substitute a comma.

³ Used also by Latimer to mean tithes (*N.E.D.*, s.v. decimation).

⁴ Others.

⁵ A pun with which Bigod was obviously well pleased, since he repeats it several times and expounds its full meaning, *infra*, p. 56.

⁶ *Sic*.

welth, and salvatyon of mans soule, for the upholdynge of the trewe and catholyque fayth, for the supportacyon of vertue, and dystuction of vyce. Have nat you (I saye) by the glykyng¹ & gleynyng,² snatchynge & scratchinge, tatchynge³ & patchynge, scrapinge & rakyng together of almost all the fatte benefyces within this realme and impropriatynge them unto youre selves, distroyed this most godlye & holy provisyon, bereyved⁴ the peple of the worde of god, of the trew knowlege of the blessed sacramentes of their trew beleve⁵ and faith in god the father, & the blode of Jesu Christ[?]

For howe can the people have any faith in god withoute preachinge? Howe shulde they have any preachynge whan ye have robbed them of their ministers? How shulde the ministers serve them whan ye have robbed them of their lyvynge? If the peple have no faith how can they have charyte? If they have no charytie, what merveyle is it, if they ronne hedlonge and be caryed from one vyce to another, from one mischefe to another? Be nat ye thoccasyon of all this? Who is elles I praye you? Have nat ye the impropriations? Be the impropriacions any thinge els savyng benefyces as parsonages, and suche lyke? Do we nat say such an abbot is parson here, such a priour is parson here? yea, suche a prioresse is parson here? Howe saye ye? thinke ye that men be foles? thynke ye that they ben asses? thinke ye that they ben stockes and stones, blockes and bones? Thynke ye that we understande no more reason than a greате menyne of you do? Is nat this abhominacion? Is this tollerable? Of all the premysses, I conclude, that if it be necessarye that the righte honoure and glorie of god be of all men (and specyally by the ministers of the churche) to be preferred, extolled, and exalted, (as most worthy is) above all thinges and names bothe in heven, hell & in erth: if his glorie (I saye) is onely to be sought, if his doctryne and commaundemente to be regarded[,] if the faythe in his onely sonne to be esteemed and valued, if his sacramentes are to be revered, if his shepe and lambes are to be fedde, and nat pyned,⁶ if the soule of a christen man be any thyng worthe, if the holye ghost is any thyng to be desyred, if all vertue and goodnesse, if peace & quyetnesse are to be wysshed of, if⁷ al good men, if murther, blodshedyng[,] incest & ravyne, with all other kyndes of inconvenyentes⁸ and myschef are to be abhorred of all men.⁹ Than¹⁰ I saye, that my improper maisters and dames are to be dispysed of all men, to be advoyded and fled of all men, to be

¹ Obtaining by trickery (*N.E.D.*, s.v. gleek).

² Gleaning.

³ Fastening together, securing. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. tache, v².

⁴ Bereaved.

⁵ Belief.

⁶ Deprived or stinted of food (*N.E.D.*, s.v. pine, 4).

⁷ *Sic*, probably for 'wysshed of al good men'.

⁸ The form seems intentional: it recurs p. 55 *infra*.

⁹ Substitute a comma.

¹⁰ Then.

shonned of all men, for that that¹ they have ben the undoyng of all men, in takynge awaye, adnullynge, abolysshynge of god and all vertues, of his blessed lawes & gospels, of fayth & baptyme, and all other holy sacramentes: and that for as moche as by their improper impropriations, the ministers of goddes holy worde and fayth,² for lacke [C.] of lyvyng be taken from us, whiche shulde enstructe us in all truthe and verytie expedient for us. But here ye wyll saye that we have teachinge inough, and that there is never the lesse preachynge for you. Wherunto I answere that in dede, if the mater be expended after youre affectyons, I thinke we had inough, although we never had no preachynge at all, for youre mynde peradventure coulde serve you well inough, that we had as many prechynges as ther growe plummes in a pease wyspe.³ And where ye say, that there be never the fewer for you: That is spoken even as suche men shulde speake: For in dede, although we had preching & techinge inoughe, yet for your partes, as moche as lyeth in you, both god & all preachynge, and all other holy thynges ben clene extyncte and rydde, and specyally this holy ordynaunce put out of the waye.

But nowe ye wyll objecte that no ordynaunce of god is broken, hindered, or prohibyted on your behalfe in this mater: For though the benefyce be improprieate to a monaster, I wolde saye to a monasterie, yet thabbot or prioure appoynteth a monke or chanon to be the minister,⁴ and to preche the worde of god to the parysshe, who shall tarye and abyde amonge his parysshoners, and have oute of the same benefyce a sufficyente lyvyng, and the rest thereof to come home to thabbot and his bretherne: and this is no brekyng of goddes ordynaunce, but rather a turnyng of it to a better use. Whereunto, I answere, that where any such vicare or minyster is instytuted of his abbot or priour, and trewly laboureth in thadministration of goddes worde, it is nat onely well done to gyve [C.ii] him a sufficyent lyvyng out of the same benefyce, but also he were well worthye to have it every whete, & as for the rest that haboundeth, let him kepe hospytalyte, as Paule commaundeth,⁵ or of necessitye wyllleth him to do, and I saye, there shall but lytell remayne to sende home to thabbot, and if he do nat kepe hospytalyte of the rest, than is he a thefe and thabbot another, for the rest is

¹ *Sic*; 'for that' being a normal synonym for 'because', which was often followed by 'that'.

² An anticipation of Puritan phraseology.

³ I.e. in a handful of pease-straw; perhaps an expression Bigod had heard at home in Yorkshire. Thomas Tusser has 'strawisp and peasebolt', i.e. pease-straw (*N.E.D.*, s.v. pease, 5).

⁴ In particular the very numerous Augustinian canons concerned themselves with parochial ministration; their houses frequently appointed their own members to benefices in their gift. Cf. *Chron. Butley Priory*, p. 35.

⁵ Rom. xii. 13.

the poore indygentes.¹ But howe faythfull and dilygent suche men be[,] so instytuted by abbottes & priours[,] to preache the worde of god, and how sore they be therwith charged by their heedes.² I thynke though I wolde cloke it, yet theffecte wyl nat suffre it. Yea, I beleve rather that they ben the stronge persecutours of goddes worde, rather than the furtherers therof. I wolde I mighte in this poynte lye, but I am sorye that it is so trewe.

But nowe these men beyng never without excuses, may peradventure thinke this to be a good answeere for me. We praye for the soules of them that have improperted³ such benefyces unto us, & synge masse & diryge⁴ for them, & set up tapers for them to burne both day & night. Wherunto fyrst I say, that if a man demaunded of you an accompte⁵ to be gyven of youre so doyng, askyng you who taught you to apply the blessed masse that waye, with the psalmes and lessons in the diryge conteyned, and desyred you to shew scripture for it, I thynke peradventure that ye might come short home of a wyse answeere, which if ye can make, I thinke there is no man but he wyl be wel content therwith. Furthermore, we graunt that the scripture commendeth moch the praier of a iust man,⁶ but we be nat yet fully agreed that ye be those iuste men of whom the scripture meaneth. Agayne, albeit that it might be iustified (as I trowe it wyl never be) that ye ben even the verye selfe same men, yet whan wyl ye prove us that ye oughte to have a lyvyng for your prayer[?] If ye come in and answeere that: *Dignus est operarius mercede sua*.⁷ The labourer is worthy to have his rewarde for his payne: we answeere that those wordes were never m[e]ante in that sence, nor of no suche labourers. And of this we have a good proufe in the .xxiii. of Mat. where Christ rebuketh the scribes & pharyseis even for the same maner of lynyng that ye use, that is to saye, by cause they wolde lyvye lyke idle belyes, under the pretence, that daye and night they prayed for the people[:] to whom Christ sayde: Wo be to you scribes and pharyseis:⁸ yea, but why? Forsoth sayth Christ, even therfore bicause that under the pretence and coloure of longe prayers, ye eate up the houses or substaunce of the wydowes,⁹ for the whiche ye shall

¹ I.e. the remainder belongs by right to the indigent poor.

² I.e. how strictly they are charged by the heads of their houses to preach; this, of course, ironically intended.

³ *Sic*, in ridicule.

⁴ Dirge, derived from *dirige*, the first word of the antiphon at matins in the office of the dead.

⁵ Account.

⁶ E.g. Proverbs xv. 8; James, v. 16.

⁷ I Tim. v. 18; cf. Matt. x. 10 and *supra*, p. 45, n. 4.

⁸ Cf. Matt. xxiii. 13-36.

⁹ Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47. In each case Tyndale's phraseology differs from Bigod's; e.g. Mark xii. 40: 'and devoure widdowes houses, and that under coloure of longe prayinge'.

be full sore punysshed. Howe saye ye, might nat the scribes & pharyses have brought in: *Dignus est mercenarius mercede sua*, against Christ? Thynke you they were nat lerned as wel as you: but they knew full well it coulde nat serve. Ye wyll say peradventure that ye be nat scribes and some men saye, that ye loke as lyke them, as a horse loketh lyke a mare, and yet a horse is nat a mare, nor a mare a horse: but yet they be both of one kynde: and so be you say they and the pharyseis. Here nowe lyeth the mater & bledeth, you standynge at youre negative, and they at their affirmatyve: Therefore howe might this mater be discussed? Forsoth I can nat se but we must be faine to impanell a iury of .xii. honest men.¹

But in earnest, albeit that ye mighte as wel lyve by prayer as the precher maye of the gospels, yet me thinketh that good honestye wolde, that fyrst ere ye take any money for it, ye made a good proufe that the worlde were the better for youre prayer, and that ye could make men sure to do them good with youre prayer, orelles I can nat tell what I shulde say. And againe in case ye mighte have a lyvyng by the scripture for your prayer, & that ye were those same good & iust men, the prayer of whom the scripture so moche enhaunseth, yet I besech you where have ye that scripture that techeth you to take the lyvyng frome the prechers, & to robbe them of their lyvynges, & the people of the lyving of the soule, & of fayth, charyte, and all goodnesse, & to lyve upon stollen goodes? Some men that favoure these newe founde sectes,² wyll peradventure say: Well, yet it is better these monkes, chanons, and suche lyke have the impropriatyons, (whiche though they preche nat, yet they kepe some hospitalyte³) rather than the secular prestes shulde have them, as they have had before, which kepe no hospitalyte nor preche nother. To this it is easy to answer: That it is nat mete that any man what soever he be, shuld receyve the benefyte or frute of a precher, onless he do his duty therefore. *Qui administrat evangelium ex evangelio vivat.*⁴ That is, he that ministreth, techeth & precheth the worde of god is right worthy to lyve upon, and by the gospel:⁵ and to preche he is bounde, if he wyl receyve such wages, under the payne of dampnatyon (as we preved a lytell before by thauthorite of the same Paule) if he be nat let⁶ by god, that is to say by sycknesse, & if he do nat preche he is worthy to have no

¹ Ostensibly in a jocular sense, but presumably suggesting that there would be no doubt as to the verdict of a jury of honest men.

² Used of the friars by Wyclif, and subsequently by others to mean religious orders in general (*N.E.D.*, s.v. sect, 1b). By 'newe founde', Bigod implies that all the orders are relatively recent phenomena of Christianity.

³ A grudging but significant admission; there can be no doubt that many monasteries continued to dispense traditional hospitality to rich and poor callers alike.

⁴ I Cor. ix. 14; *recte*, 'qui Evangelium *annuntiant* de Evangelio vivere'.

⁵ Tyndale: 'they which preache the gospel, shuld live of the gospel.'

⁶ Prevented.

penye of suche fruites, albeit he mumble up never so many matenses, David psalters,¹ trentals,² diryges, and suche lyke longe prayers, as we proved before whan we spake of longe prayers.

For this is a good argument: He preacheth dilygently and trewly: Ergo, he is worthy to have therefore a lyvyng, and even so is this: He doth neither of them, ergo, he can challenge³ no lyvyng: and this is Paules mynde, whan he sayeth: He that minystreth the worde of god, must lyve therby: excepte peradventure ye can prove that to mumble up a longe payre of mattens be to preche the worde of god; whiche if ye can bringe to conclusyon, by my trouthe ye have wonne the maistrye for me,⁴ for I truste than, that whan I saye my mattens, that my mattens maye stande for a symple collation⁵ as wel as your mattens: and than I se nat but that an impropriation were as holsome for my bodye as for yours. And where it maye be obiected that over that, that the prestes kepe none hospytalytie, they neither preache at their benefyces, nether come at them neither yet ever loke thitherwarde some of them: yea, and if it chaunce some of them to preache, it is suche geare, that it were more for the helth of his parisshe⁶ soules that he wer tonge tyed. Forsoth that is even as trewe as the gospell: yea, & so trewe that it maketh myne herte wepe to thynke upon it. I beseche god ones to amende it whan his wyll is. Is it nat great pitye to se a man to have thre or foure benefyces: yea, peradventure halfe a score or a dosyn, whiche he never cometh at, but setteth in every one of them a syr John lacke laten, that can scarce rede his porteus,⁷ orels suche a ravenynge wolfe as can do nothyng but devoure the sely shepe with his false doctryne, and sucke their substaunce from them. Lorde, if it be thy pleasure, ones have mercye upon us, and gyve grace that we may have some remedye founde for thys myschiefe, bothe of impropriatyons, and also of them that minister nat the worde of god faythfully upon their

¹ Cf. Henry Bradshaw, *Life of St. Werburge* (1513; *E.E.T.S.*, lxxxviii, 1. 2546: 'And devoutly say Davyd psalter holly knelyng with great reverence.' John Fisher writes (1509) 'many other prayers & psalters of Davyd' (*N.E.D.*, s.v. psalter, 2). But psalter was also used of collections of prayers not from the Psalms, e.g. Richard Whitford's *Jesus Psalter*, first published in 1529 and attaining many editions.

² Trental: a set of thirty requiem masses. They were sometimes said on one day. In 1531 Sir John Rocliff orders a trental to be said at the Greyfriars, York, on the day of his burial (*Testamenta Eboracensia*, v. 320). In 1555 Robert Parkyn and his neighbour William Watson arranged to say a trental over a longer period for their friends and benefactors (*Trans. Hunter Archaeol. Soc.*, vi, pt. 6, pp. 282-3).

³ Lay claim to (*N.E.D.*, s.v. challenge).

⁴ I.e. you have proved my own argument.

⁵ Sermon (*N.E.D.*, s.v. collation, 5).

⁶ Parishioners'.

⁷ A portable breviary, one of the commonest books found in the wills of early Tudor priests. Variant spellings are extremely numerous; e.g. 'portas' is more common than the present form.

benefyces: as they ought to do: for I have knowen suche, that whan they have rydden by a benefyce wherof they have ben persone, they could natte tell that it was their benefyce.¹

This is a wonderfull blyndnesse. And yet I thynke, suche or the same benefyced man wyll natte stycke to ryde an hundreth myles, to prycke a brouche upon an ymage cote,² and thynke it a righte hyghe merytorious dede. But to such tyme as it shall please the kinges most honourable maiestye, of his benygne mercy and pytie, with his most honourable counsel to se a reformation, as well for thabuse of impropriatyons as for the incharytable demeanoure of all benefyced men, that be nat resydent & abydyng upon their benefices, there to do their bounden duty.³ It shall never be wel in this church of Christ in Englande, wherof his grace is the supreme heed, nor yet the truthe of goddes holye worde shall ever go forwarde in his righte trade⁴ and kynde. They have yet another abiectyon,⁵ and this is it: If impropriatyons be taken from monasteries, say they, then could they kepe no houses nor hospytalyte, but shulde be compelled to lyve all in povertie. Where unto I answere, that as for povertie it is their professyon, and standeth with their own monastycall rules: for they all professe the same at their fyrste enterynge into relygyon: yea, and it must be wyllfull⁶ poverty also, wherefore I can nat se by their professyon but that they ben bounde to helpe to all thinges that standeth with povertie.

And as for kepinge hospitalyte with stollen goodes of impropriatyons, I thinke it can nat vayle⁷ them but lytell to allege it, wherefore this obiectyon is nat worthe a strawe, and may better be called an abiectyon, than an obiectyon. Besydes this I knowe very fewe or none, but and if these impropriatyons were clene taken awaye from theym: yea, and a gret dele more, yet shulde they have more lefte in their handes than ever had Benedict, Bernard, Dominik, or Fraunces, or yet Bruno:⁸ yea, more than many men thinke or can thinke well bestowed upon them. But & a man might (savyng their pacyence) be so bolde with them, what mater were it (under correction I speke) if all these improfytable sectes,⁹ and stronge sturdye route of idle paunches were a lytell poorer, to thende that

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 17.

² Pilgrimage was among the chief targets of both Lollard and early Lutheran opinion. It was naturally coupled with the cult of images and relics. Among the early Protestant writers of Yorkshire, see especially Wilfrid Holme in *Y.A.J.*, xxxix. 129-30.

³ Substitute a comma.

⁴ Procedure or regular course (*N.E.D.*, s.v. trade, 3, 5).

⁵ *Sic*, in ridicule, as in the next paragraph *infra*.

⁶ Voluntary.

⁷ A fairly common form of avail (*N.E.D.*, s.v. vail).

⁸ Apparently misprinted 'Brimo', but certainly referring to St. Bruno (1030-1101), founder of the Carthusian Order.

⁹ Cf. *supra*, p. 51, n. 2.

the trew relygion of christ might thereby somthyng be sette up and avaunsed, and syfficient¹ company of the ministers of goddes true worde² provyded for in all partes. I praye you, what an idle sorte be founde and brought up in Abbeyes, that never wyll laboure whyles they ben there, nor yet whan they come thence to other mens servyce, in so moche that there goth a comen prouerbe: That he which hath ones ben in an abbey wyll ever more after be slouthfull, for the whiche cause they ben called of many men, Abbey loutes or lubbers.³ And some saye⁴ that many of our holye fathers spende nat a lytell upon my cosyn Jane, Elsabeth, and Marget,⁵ (ye knowe what I meane) insomuche that, that even they which be most popyshe of all, & knowe none other god almost than the gret drafsacke⁶ of Rome, can nat deny this to be trew.⁷ Whiche popyshe persons nat withstandynge wyll nat ones open their lypes to sue for a reformation to the kinge our moste soveraine lorde. And the cause why, as it is noysed, & as good signyfycations ben therof given, is for that, that some such abbot or priour wyll nat stycke to gyve an hundreth poundes at a clappe to such a champyon to speke in his favour in tyme of nede.⁸ And I can beleve it well: for I se no men in the world have mo sure stakes to stande with them whan they have any urgent busines than the monkes have, even of them that knowe their noughty conversatyon, as well as I knowe my righte hande from my lyfte. Now what shuld cause men to be so untrusty in a matter of untruth, let other men iuge. I can gesse no mater or cause more lykely, than Auri sacra fames (as Vergyll calleth it⁹) that is: the myschevouse & insacyable

¹ *Sic.*

² Another anticipation of Puritan phraseology.

³ A common phrase. Cf. Fish, p. 14; 'Set these sturdy lobies a brode in the world'; Francis Trigge, *An Apologie* (1589), p. 9: 'idle persons were called abbey lubbers: fatt men were saide to have abbots' faces'. Brinklow, *Lamentacion* (*E.E.T.S., Extra Ser.*, xxii. 88) calls the clergy in general 'a sorte of lusty lubbars'.

⁴ 'Some say': the phrase used in 1532 by Christopher St. German when reporting clerical scandals, and for which he was reproved by More. Cf. H. Maynard Smith, *Pre-Reformation England*, pp. 52-3.

⁵ *Sic.*

⁶ A sack of refuse; figuratively, a big paunch or a lazy glutton. Cf. Thomas Becon (1564): 'The priests of Baal . . . pampered their idle draffsack bellies with all kinds of pleasant wines and dainty dishes' (*N.E.D.*, s.v. draffsack).

⁷ Attacks on the sexual morals of the clergy, especially of the monks, were nothing new, but became exceptionally violent about this period. For example, both Simon Fish and Wilfrid Holme easily outclass Bigod. This linking of the subject with 'Rome' occurred all too easily, if somewhat irrationally; that it found acceptance may be due to lurid stories about the Papal Curia deriving from the Borgia years.

⁸ Cf. Fish, p. 8: 'are not all the lerned men in your realme in fee with them, to speake yn your parliament house for them ageinst your crowne, dignite, and comon welth of your realme; a few of youre owne lerned counsell onely excepted?'

⁹ 'quid non mortalia pectora cogis | Auri sacra fames!' *Aeneid*, iii. 56-7.

hunger & covetousnesse of golde. And I fere me that even at this day, money passeth fast from marchant to marchant. A thyng there is in the wynde, what soever it be, that every man knoweth nat of, which I trust in god wyl one day come to lyght, as well as other thinges have: for I dout nat but christ is true, which sayth: *Nihil est absconditum quod non revelabitur*.¹ There is nothing so craftely conveyd² but at the last it wyll & shall come to revelation.³ But what myschef care they to commyt if they may redeme it for money, & may have suche ioly fe-[D.]-lowes to defende them in every corner? What care they for the losse of a lytel money, which they can finde again in the sore labour of their poore tenants[?]

How so ever the worlde go they lose nothinge, nor wyll lose nothinge, nor wyll eat the lesse by one cromme or bit of brede: Be there never so great darth in the worlde, yet wyll they mesure their meate by the bely. As ther was a blinde abbot in the world which never wolde set him downe at dyner, but he wold fyrst undo the poynte⁴ before his bely, & let it oute a certayne length, & to such tyme he had fylled his paukener⁵ to the poynt, he wolde never cesse as blinde as he was. Mary, some men say, that he wolde seldome make any souper: & I thinke verily he neded nat moch. But to my purpose, remove me ones away that cause materiall of all these inconvenyentes & theeffect shal sone be removed. But as for to remove the cause efficient⁶ from them, that is, the spirit of the devyll, it were very harde. For that can no man do but god, whiche can make a Camell to go through the eye of a nedle:⁷ but as for the cause materyall, or their infynyte sommes of ryches, of golde & of silver, maye soone be removed, if it plesse our most redouted prince, with his most honourable counsell. Take from them their improper impropriations with other superfluytes, & within a while peradventure they may be good men. And if nat that, yet am I sure that outwardly they shal nat be a quarter part so yll as they be now. It were wel done, me thinketh that suche men had their impropriations as wolde do faythful seryce to god,

¹ Matt. x. 26; Mark iv. 22; Luke viii. 17.

² The expression suggests that Bigod may also have had in mind the long leases and annuities which religious houses were making, not only to relatives of their heads, but to outsiders (like Bigod's patron Thomas Cromwell!) able to do them favours.

³ Tyndale (Matt. x. 26): 'There is no thinge so close, that shall not be opened, and no thinge so hyd, that shall not be knowen.'

⁴ Usually a lace or cord used for fastening the doublet to the hose; here perhaps the cord of his monastic habit.

⁵ Perhaps for 'pautener', a bag (*N.E.D.*, s.v.).

⁶ Here and in 'cause materyall' *infra*, Bigod uses the scholastic terminology which he presumably acquired at Oxford. The four causes of Aristotle were: the efficient (the agency by which a thing is produced); the formal (essence of the thing caused); the material (elements or matter from which the thing is produced); and the final (the end for which it is produced).

⁷ Matt. xix. 24; Mark x. 25; Luke xviii. 25.

to their prince, & to their parissh, in prechyng, settinge forth syncerely & purely the worde of the lyvyng god: & other¹ that wyl nat or can nat so do, it [D.ii] were best they were clerely dyspatched² of suche benefyces as they have, what kinde of benefyces so ever they be gret or smal, forked cap or plaine cap,³ according to S. Pauls minde. Qui non laboret, non manducet.⁴

He that wyl take no paines, let him take no gaines:⁵ but if he wyl nedes eate, let him nedes swete, orels let him eate his thombes.⁶ Howe say ye nowe all my lordes, abbottes & priours with your improper impropriations? Whiche of good congruence⁷ god put in your mynde so to call, as he dyd into bysshop Cayphas minde ones,⁸ to saye the truthe agaynste his wyll:⁹ for if all the worlde had sought a name for them, he coulde never have devysed a better worde than impropriations: for in good fayth they were never proper unto you by the worde of god: but even as fayre stolen good as any is in christendome. Howe saye ye[?] (I saye). Have ye any thinge to allege for you agaynst my poore reasons: if ye have, come forth and ye shall be herde. I wyl nat that ye lay for you your old ryveld¹⁰ refuge[:] this dyd our fathers, there hath ben as wyse men as there be nowe: why dyd nat they espye this geare? Tell nat me what your faders did, which were blynded with such fathers as ye ben your selfe.¹¹ But tell me whether your fathers in so doinge dyd well or nat, & accordinge to the scripture or nat. And as for wysdome I tell you agayne, that there is but one wysdome, that we may surely trust unto, which is the wysdome of god lefte in his scriptures¹²[:] if they can prove that their facte & dede in gyvinge impropriations to such as ye be, was grounded, upon this wysdome, than¹³ we wil & must nedes admyt it & them to be wise, or els in thinges perteyning to the soule, we wyl approve no wisdom but that.

Thinke you this a good solution to say: Were there nat as wyse men before our tyme as ther be now? Ar ye nat a shamed of suche extreme madnes? I pray you tel me one thing. Were there nat as great foles before our tymes as there be now? & I beseche

¹ Others.

² Deprived or relieved. (*N.E.D.*, s.v. dispatch, 7).

³ I.e. whether accompanied by a mitre, or merely by a plain priest's cap.

⁴ II. Thess. iii. 10. *Recte*, 'nisi quis non vult operari, nec manducet.'

⁵ Tyndale: 'yf ther were eny whiche wolde not worke, that the same shuld not eate.'

⁶ Cf. Fish, p. 14: set these sturdy lobies . . . to get their living with their labour in the swete of their faces'; similarly Brinklow, *Lamentacion* (*E.E.T.S.*, *Extra Ser.*, xxii. 88).

⁷ A common phrase, meaning 'as is fitting or reasonable' (*N.E.D.*, s.v. congruence, 2b).

⁸ Once.

⁹ Matt. xxvi. 63-4.

¹⁰ Wrinkled, shrivelled (*N.E.D.*, s.v. rivel).

¹¹ Sherbrook (*infra*, p. 90) uses the contrary argument.

¹² The universal appeal of the New Learning. ¹³ Then.

you, why might nat our fathers that made these same impropriations be of that same sorte[?] I promyse you except you had them with this condition, that ye shulde trewly preche the worde of god for them, I ensure you it was the most fonde & folysh acte (one of them) that ever was done: ye,¹ & a noughty acte also: if at the last it were their acte, & nat rather your tyrannouse usurpation. But admyt that al your forfaders were wyse both tagge and rag,² & nat one fole amongst them, what than? Is this a good argument? Our fore faders were as wyse before our time as men be now: Ergo this was wysely done? I pray you who taught you so to reason? Many a wyse man somtyme may playe the fole, & over slyp³ himselfe. If he may than (as the northern man saith), Gay layke⁴ you with your olde wysdome, & your wyse fathers. And so helpe me god & holydom,⁵ if your wise faders never plaied wyser touches than they dyd in this behalfe, me thinketh you might as wel another while allege upon your wise mothers, & what soever your faders were, me thinketh their sones be nat the wysest that ever I knew. Finally if thus moche may persuade you, that your impropriations of conscience cannat be kepte any lenger.⁶ I beseche you for the love of god, if any drop of grace be in you, to gyve place to the simple and playne truthe which I have here set forth, without either subtilite or colours,⁷ as the thinges wherunto I never gave my minde, nor entendeth to do. But if ye can nat gyve place to the poore reasons here made, sette your pennes to the boke, & as wel as god wyll gyve me grace, ye shall be answered.

And here I make an ende, nothinge medlynge with the patronage of the seyde impropriations to whom they shall belonge, nor yet with the persones to whom suche benefyces ought to be given, nor what ordre is to be taken about them: but I commend al suche parsels⁸ to them that be of more experyence & lernynge than I, & to them that be in authorite, as to our moste gracyouse lorde & prince, of all other princes the most excellent & worthy, & and to his most honourable counsel to whom with our moste vertuose

¹ Yea.

² A phrase related to 'tag, rag and bobtail'. Bigod here means: if we admit all your forefathers were wise, even the rabble, and not one fool among them, what then?

³ To make a slip, act inadvertently (*N.E.D.*, s.v. overslip, 1b).

⁴ I.e. 'go and play with your old wisdom.' Gae, gay, etc., were common Northumbrian forms. Layke (modern: lark) is a northern form from Old Norse *leikr*. In 1554 Gabriel Walker of Rothwell incurred a charge of heresy for ridiculing Catholic ritual with the words, 'What is yon? A Christinmas play in faythe. Yonder is a gay Yole layke' (A. G. Dickens, *The Marian Reaction in the Diocese of York*, pt. ii, p. 8).

⁵ A common saying of the period, found in More's writings and elsewhere.

⁶ Substitute a comma.

⁷ Specious and plausible pretences. (*N.E.D.*, s.v. colour, 11 *seqq.*).

⁸ Items: the term was used of small sections of a book.

quene Anne, & princesse Elizebeth,¹ & all their honourable counsell,
be longe lyfe and ioye to the pleasure of god.

So be it I beseche Jesu.

Printed at London by Tho. Godfray.

Cum privilegio Regali.

¹ *Sic.* Cf. on the value of this **passage** for dating the publication, *supra*,
p. 9.

ROBERT PARKYN

DEVOTIONAL TREATISES

[Aberdeen University Library, MS. 185]

[Fo. 211]

[FOUR LIVES]

In thys miserable lyff ther be fowre soondry sortts of lyffinge.¹ The fyrst is a miserable lyvinge. The seconde is a actyve lyffinge, the thride is myxtt lyffinge, the fowrtt is contemplatyve lyffinge. Myserable lyffing is devidyde in two. The one is by penurye, the other is by visius & synfull lyffinge. The lyff of penury is to lyve in povertie, or by beggyng as beggers & vacabundes do usse, the which is a miserable lyffing, specially yf thay be nott contentyde withe ther poverttie, butt grudge & murmure aganst god, or aganst tham thatt wyll gyve tham nothings, or els dothe covitt and desire to have goodes & riches; suche be wrechis, for thay shall have no meade nor rewarde of god for ther povertie, ut besyde, the wretchide lyffing shall be punyshide in tyme to cum, so thatt thay shall have duple peane and sorow, exceptt amendementt in this lyffe by patience. The other lyffinge is to lyffe viciowslye or synfully in pompe & pride, in voluptuousnes & sensuall pleassure, delytinge in synne, regardinge nott the commandementtes of god, carynge nather for god nor for the devill, nather for hevin nor hell; suche be the children of the devill. And for suche synfull lyffynge to the devyll will thai, exceptt thay amende ther wretchidnes.

The seconde lyffe is actyve lyffe, the which consistithe in observynge the ten commandementtes of god, exchewynge synne and usynge the workes of mercye, occupyng wordly busynes & occupations justly and trewly withe owtt fraude, gylle and deceatte, usinge the lyffe of Martha, which was occupyde & troblide abowtt many thinges. And who so do medle with the worlde & the busynes of itt, shall nott or can nott be all tymes att rest, peace & qwyettnes, butt shall be trowblide in one thinge or a other to prove the patience of man, the which patience yf a man gan gytt, itt overcomithe all thinges in this worlde. Wherfor patience is the bonde of all actyve lyffinge.

¹ On this scheme cf. *supra*, p. 23.

The thirde lyffe is myxtt lyffe,¹ the which is laudable, considerynge itt comprehendithe bothe thactyve lyffe and contemplatiffe lyve. Christ and his disciples uside this lyffe, for other whylle Christ dyd pray, other whille he prechide, other whille he made seake men wholle, other whylle he dyd correctt offenderes, other whille he fedde the people thatt were hungre, other whylle he dyd cumfurthe tham thatt were in hevynes, as he dyde Mary and Martha when lazarus ther brother was deade.² Thapostills followyde this trade,³ as itt appearithe in thacttes, specially in the .6. chapiter, wher itt is wrettinge, we must tayke heyde to prayer and to preching,⁴ the whiche the bischopps, prelaittes & prestes sholde diligenttly usse, nott only for ther owne mirytt, butt for the edifyinge off other.

The fowrtt lyffe is contemplative lyve, in meditacion⁵ to conside a mans owne wretchidnes, and the goodnes of god, to conside the humanitie of god, his nativitie, the circumsition, the baptisme, the doctrine, the myracles, the acttes, deades & doynge, the mawndye & thacttes doyne in itt, the passion, deathe, Resurrection and the Ascention of Christ, and to mediatte⁶ in the deitie and glorie of hevin. Contemplatiffe lyffe consistithe in prayer, in mortification of a mans selffe, & in elevation of hertt, mynde & thowghtt, in extacy & raptture. Contemplative lyffe consistithe in many thinges. Fyrst is devotion & ferventt prayer: I speak not of vocall prayer, butt the prayer which is bitwix god & the sowlle sopitide⁷ in ardentt love. The seconde consistithe in mortification of synn & mortification of bodie & sowlle, not settinge [fo. 211 v] by the bodie and sowlle, butt only by god. And yff we have any respectt to our sowlle or bodie, itt must be in god and for god. Therfor the prophett saithe, lorde for the we be mortifyde nyghtt & day. The 2 thinge⁸ consistithe in quiettnes of sprytte, nott regardynge nothings in this worlde, nather riches, promotion, dignitie, prosperitie, wealthe, seaknes, nor healthe, adversitie, nor tribulation, butt only to have our hertts and mynde on god, to have him ever in our hertts, in our myndes & thowghttes, so thatt the hertt, bodie and sowlle is jonyde to god withowtt variance or any mutabilitie.

¹ St. Augustine and St. Gregory already have this category. Cf. C. Butler, *Western Mysticism*, pp. 164-5, 176-7.

² Many others likewise took Christ as exemplifying the mixed life. Cf. e.g. Hilton, *Treatise written to a Devout Man*, ch. iv.

³ I.e. way of life: a common Tudor usage.

⁴ 'But we will continue stedfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word' (Acts vi. 4).

⁵ I.e. prayer upon a theme, as he proceeds to explain. Cf. *supra*, p. 24.

⁶ *Sic* for meditate.

⁷ Settled; more commonly, lulled to sleep. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. sopite.

⁸ Cf. for this phraseology in the Rolle school, Horstman, i. 301 ('sex thynges ther are') and i. 412 ('Foure thinges nedes men til knowe'). This classifying and enumerating of aspects of the spiritual life derives chiefly from Richard of St. Victor.

The thirde thinge is excesse¹ or elevation of mynde, the wiche comithe of a admiration of the bownttie & goodnes of god, and of a ferventt desire of the sowlle to god. The 4 thinge is a extasye, the wiche is a drownyng of a mans spritte in god by love, alyenatide from him selff for a space or tyme, the wiche thinge no man can expresse, nor thay tham selffe thatt is in itt can nott shew whatt thai fealle. The fyfftt is raptture, which is when a ghostlie man is ravisshide in to the sightt & presence of god as S. Paull was.² Blisside be thay thatt can cum to any of thes fealynges of the a fore saide thynges.

Off the highest learnynge or the highest perfection thatt can be, here after brevely followithe.

[THE HIGHEST LEARNING]³

When a man haithe perscrutide,⁴ studiede and learnide all maner of arttes, sciences & faculties, knowynge bothe good and evill, yitt heis to learne, for the highest & most cheaffe learnynge is for a man to know him selffe,⁵ for by the knowledge of a mans owne selffe, he shall learne to cum to the knowledge off the bownttie and goodnes of god. Whatt dothe all maner of sciences, arttes and faculties profite withowtt the knowledge of a mans owne selffe; his frealltie & wretchidnes; and to know the goodness, gentlenes and mercie of god? Withe owtt this trew knowledge, all other knowledges be butt frustratte matters & litle worthe. For yf a plowman or a pore begger or a sheappherde can cum and obteane the feallynge of this knowledge, he may be callide a man of highe perfection & learnynge, for ther is no learnyde man the which can soormowntt or go beyonde this knowledge by learnynge, exceptt he have the sayme.

This knowledge dothe bryng a man to mortifie him selffe, to vilipende⁶ carnall and voluptuus pleassor, regardyng nor settinge by the vanitie of this worlde, butt ever the herтт & mynde is uppon god. Wherfor he that will obteane this gostlie knowledge must exercise hym selff in the workes of mercie, and usse thacttes of contemplatyve lyffinge and in no wysse to intromytt nor medle with wordlye besynes, exceptt urgentt cawsses growndyde uppon charitie compellynge him

¹ For examples of this usage from Wyclif onwards cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. excess, 1.c. It was also used at Mountgrace of Prior Norton (*E.E.T.S.*, ccxii. 105, n. 4).

² See 2 Cor. xii. 2-4. The vision of St. Paul is often cited in this sense by mystical writers, sometimes alongside that of Moses. Cf. Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 56-7.

³ Compare with this item the protest against 'vain and secular knowledge' in *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xliii.

⁴ Searched carefully, scrutinized thoroughly. Andrew Boorde also uses the term; cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. perscrute.

⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 24. Self-knowledge is also a common theme in English devotional writings, e.g. *The Mirror of St. Edmund* in *E.E.T.S.*, xxvi. 17.

⁶ Condemn or despise: *N.E.D.*, s.v. has many examples from 1470.

to the contrarie.¹ This inwarde or spirituall knowledge bryngithe a man to have a cleane conscience, so thatt ther shall no darke clowde of synne be bitwix god and the lovinge sowlle. And than man is in liberttie of sprytte, and free fro thraldom and bondaige of imperfection, for this knowledge haithe browghtt him to perfection, the which dothe comprehend all virtues, and all virtues is comprehend in itt. Than is the luffynge sowlle drownyde in gostlie love, and ther is suche a counion² of love bytwix god and the sowlle, thatt [fo. 212] god is in suche a lovyngsowlle, and syche a lovinge sowlle is in god. Than burnithe the sowlle in love,³ the hertt and the wholle bodie is repleattide with supernaturall joye, the mynde is raptt from all terrestriall thinges in to god. Than whatt joye and cumfurthe, whatt gladnes and spirituall myrthe the sowlle and bodie, the hertt and mynde dothe fealle in god, no hertt can thinke, nor townge can tell. And he that is in this perfection of gostlie and chaste love, wether he be sleappyng or wakyng, eattyng or drynkyng, stodyng,⁴ talkinge or prayng, the lovinge sowlle and hertt dothe bren in love, desiringe continewally to be withe god, the love of his hertt feallyng more spirituall joye and cumfurthe in one howre than any carnall hartt dothe fealle all the days of the lyffe. Few or none lyffinge applyethe tham selff to cum to this knowledge. Itt is a tedious thinge for a carnall man repleatt with carnall love & affection to cum to this love, nor he shall never have itt, for carnall love and ghostlie love can not be in one hertt. He thatt haithe this love or this perfection haithe a supernaturall grace, the which begynnythe in this worlde & lyffe, and shall never have ende in the lyffe nor in the worlde to cum. And suche lovinge sowlles the which do burne in the ardentt fire of gostlie and godly love shall be locatyde & placide in hevin amonge the highest ordre of angells,⁵ the which be callyde the Seraphins, for thay do brene in the hevinly and celestiall love of the deitie, couned⁶ to god in amowrs. Gratus be thay the which can attayne & gett this perfection, the whiche cumythe first by the inwarde and deape knowledge of a mans owne selffe, and of the knowledge of the bountifulnes of god. The which knowledge god of his infinitte goodnes by the ferventt instinction of tholly gost illuminatte the sowlles, the hertts and myndes of his faitheful servanttes that thay may guste & taist spiritually the

¹ Hilton in *Treatise written to a Devout Man*, ch. iv, likewise stresses the considerations of charity which bind some naturally contemplative men to the mixed life.

² *N.E.D.*, s.v. co-une, cites examples of the 17th and early 18th centuries: compare 'triune'; also 'onehead' used in the *Epistle of Prayer* (E. Gardner, *The Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 88).

³ A very frequent image in the Rolle writings. Cf. e.g. *De Incendio Amoris*, ed. M. Deanesly, pp. 181-2, 184-5, 207-9, 269.

⁴ Studying.

⁵ Compare Rolle, *Ego dormio* in Horstman, i. 51, 415.

⁶ Cf. note 2 *supra*.

efficacie of itt. And than thay thatt do know or fealle this, shall perceave whatt this matter dothe meane, the wiche by writtinge I can nott expresse, as the auctor of knowledge and love dothe knowe,¹ who sende his luffers² ther desires, and sende abowndant grace to synneres, that thai may know tham selffes, doynge trew penance for ther offences and trespases perpetratide aganst god and the worlde, Amen. This matter ensewinge treattithe of Deathe.

[OF DEATH]³

After thatt a man haithe gotten and obteanyde all maner of scienceys, arttes and faculties in this worlde, att the last ther is no remedie butt we must all dye: how we shall dye, when & in whatt tyme or howre no man can tell. Wherfor itt is necessarie for every man to be in a redynes. Ther be 4 maner of deathes, the first is criminall deathe, the seconde corporall deathe, the third is the deathe of the sowlle, the fowrtt is infernall deathe. Criminall deathe is a privation of grace, when the sowlle is mortifide or deade by deadly synne or criminall synne, wheruppon it is wrettin in .15. chapter of the Sapience,⁴ A man dothe kyll his sowlle by malice. Yf a man do kyll his sowlle by malice, he may then kyll his sowlle by other synnes, committyng and doynge synne. Also our lorde saithe in Ezech.,⁵ The sowlle that do synne shall dye, wherfor lett every man bewarre of kyllynge of his sowlle by synne. Corporall death is when a mans sowlle or spiritt is seqwestride or separatide from the bodie. And this deathe is irremediable by cawsse itt is ordeanide to all men ons to dye, and therfor a man can nott ever lyffe. Who is the man that lyvithe & shall nott [fo. 212v] se deathe, Senec saithe.⁶

Ther is nothings so sure as deathe, and nothings so unsure as the howre of deathe, for deathe dothe looke for us in every place and howre; deathe do tayke yinge and olde, he haithe mercy of no man. After the diffinition of the philosopher,⁷ Deathe is a longe sleappe, a feare to ryche men, a desirus thinge to pore men, a cheange incurable, a theaffe to man, a taker away of lyffe, the resolution of al thinges. Therfor it is good to lyve well, itt is a sure way, for he thatt lyffithe well can not dy a evill deathe, and he that lyvithe

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 25. Peryn (p. 98), though probably writing later, has 'For there shalt thou feel and know such things which can never be told . . . which he only knoweth right well that hath had the experience hereof'.

² His lovers: a Rolle phrase. Cf. e.g. Horstman, i. 147.

³ Compare with the succeeding passage *The Boke of the Craft of Dying* in Horstman, ii. 406 *seqq.* The parallels include similar quotations from David, Seneca, John xxiii, 'St. Gregor', 'Sapience', etc.

⁴ Cf. Vulgate, *Sapientiae*, xvi. 14.

⁵ Ezek. xviii. 4.

⁶ The *Moral Essays* and *Moral Epistles* are frequently cited by earlier mystical writers. Cf. Horstman, i. 137, 140, 316, etc.

⁷ Aristotle is no doubt intended, as *infra*, p. 67, but the catalogue which follows seems to be adapted from that in *The Boke of the Craft of Dying*, in Horstman, ii. 407, or some similar passage.

evill can nott dye well; as S. Augustine saithe, Wherfor whils we have tyme lett us lyffe well, for ther is no remedie butt we must dye. And yff we remembre deathe, we shall exchew synne. Plato saithe, The highest philosophy is the remembrance of death. And when deathe cumythe or drawithe neighe, the nosse & the featt do waxe colde, the face is wan and paylle, the teathe do waxe blakke and the body dryethe upp. Than comythe many colde sweattes, the breathe dothe stynke, the bodely strengthe decay, the sowlle fearithe, the mynde is trowblid, the wittes do faylle, and other whylle the fleshe do trymble. On a tyme ther was a man browghtht worde to Anaxagoras¹ thatt his sone was deade. He answeride & saide, thatt is no newes, for ther is no man lyffinge butt he must dye. And so must I: therfor let every man prepaire for thatt thinge thatt is most sure of.

The thirde is the deathe of the sowle: yff the sowlle do departt from the bodye in deadly synne, then the sowlle goethe to everlastynge peane & is dampnide to the perpetuall fyere of hell, the whiche is inextingwishible. And ther shall the sowlle lye to the day of judgmentt, and att the generall resurrection the body and sowlle shall be yonide together, and then shall the body and the sowle lye and be in hell in everlastinge peane. The 4 is infernall deathe, for in hell is no lyffe butt a staitte or a Companye of evill creaturs, of evill angells, and evil men and women, ever dyinge & yitt thay shall never dye, butt contynew in peane & hevynes, in troble and vexation, never in rest and qwiettnes, butt ever in dolowre, deprivide from the vision of god and the joyes of hevin. And therfor S. Gregor saithe,² In hell is deathe withe owtt deathe. And for as myche as I do pretende in the next matter followyng to treatt uppon hell,³ therfor now I will returne to speake of the deathe of the bodye, which is a daly thinge in exercisse amonge us. Job saithe a man borne of a woman lyvinge a shortt tyme is repleattide with many miseryes.⁴ Yff our lyffe be miserable and shortt, whatt sholde a man sett by the vanitie of this world, or whatt sholde a man delytte in a shortt voluptuous pleassor, or what sholde a man sett by any transitorye thinge in this miserable worlde, when thatt all thinges that is in the worlde, ather it is the concupiscence of the fleshe, or the concupiscens of the eyes or prowdenes of lyffe, as S. John saithe, and therfor the worlde shall passe and the concupiscence of itt.⁵ Ther is nothings in this worlde, butt itt shall have

¹ The physical philosopher (500-428 B.C.) who taught at Athens. For similar sayings attributed to him in a source perhaps known to Parkyn, see *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (E.E.T.S., ccxi), p. 278.

² St. Gregory's *Dialogues* are among the authorities most commonly cited by writers of the Rolle group. Cf. Horstman, i. 106, 136-7, 303; ii. 392, 396, 400, 401, 411, 414, 416-17.

³ I.e. in the ensuing treatise, omitted from the present selection. Cf. *supra*, p. 21.

⁴ Job xiv. 1.

⁵ I John ii. 16-17.

a ende. Wherfor we, seynge thatt we shall have no permanentt nor abydinge place here, lett us prepare our selffe every day for to dy. We have many warnynges thatt we sholde be in a redines, for Christ saithe, Wayke ye & be in a redynes, for yow know nott the day nor the howre of deathe. Deathe cumythe sodenly, and yitt commonly he dothe gyffe many warnynges, as thus som ther frendes or children he takithe away from tham by death. Some haithe sondrie or diversse seaknesses, some be aygide, some have one myscheance and sum haithe a other mysfortune. And all is to gyve a man warnynge to prepaire and [fo. 213] to be in a redines to dye. S. Gregor saithe, The more a man dothe draw neighe to deathe, the more circumspectt sholde he be in a redines to dy. When we be deyde, we be soyne forgotten; ther is few or none that will remembre us, and few ther be thatt grettly will helpe us. Then we wolde we had lyffid well, butt than it is too laytte, for as we have doyne, so we shall be rewardyde. Therfor lett every man loke to him selff be tyme, to amende him selff, for god will not be mockyde. And yf he will nott be mockyde, then I cowncel every man to forsayke synne, or¹ that synne forsayke him, and utterly to leave vice, & nott to sett by the vanitie of this worlde. For who so doth relinqwishe the carnall sensualitie, observeinge the commandementtes of god, lyving in the love and feare of god, neade nott to feare deathe, for itt is wrettin in John, thay that so do shall go from deathe to lyffe, to our good god.² Carynge nott for lyffe nor deathe, nather for hell nor hevin, lett me be with god & god in me, maker and redeamer of sowles, and tayke yow all thinges and lett me alone withe him. I will tayke him as he is, and nott as I sholde know him, butt I must dye lyke a synner most of all, but yett I feare nott to dye, and why? So Ambrosse saithe, I feare nott to dye, by cawsse we have a good god which is full of pitie, mercy and gentlenes to tham which be penitentt, haveinge lovinge herttes, with a remorsse of conscience for myche ingratitude. S. Peter considerynge his owne ingritudenes was a trew penitentt, by and for the which he was made prince of thappostills to tayke pittie & compassion of other synneres, and glad to dye for Christ his lover and masters his sayke. And therfor the gentilnes of Christ considerithe³ the lovinge hertt of S. Paull repleattide with grace saide, I desire to be dissolvide owtt of this lyve, and to be withe Christ.⁴ For he lovithe me, and I do love him, and why sholde we be a sondre, wher ther is butt one hertt, one love, & one will and mynde? Lovinge hertts wolde never be a sondre, and therfor when we shall dye, yf we lyffe accordinge as he haithe commandyd us, we shall be well, and go to him thatt is our frende, our master, our lover, our

¹ Ere.² John v. 24.³ For consideryde: cf. *infra*, p. 66, l. 33. This is presumably a slip rather than a genuine reversion to the old northern form.⁴ Philippians i. 23; Vulgate: *desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo*.

lord, our redemer and our god. And lett no man doubtte the wiche lyvithe well, can dy evill, for S. Augustine saithe, he thatt lyvithe accordinge to gods his laws can nott dye evill, and he thatt dothe lyve evilly in synne skarsly can dye well. Lett every man look homewarde to thatt thinge, thatt there is no remedie, for die we must, and he thatt lyvith well haith a grett advantaige, for in whatt howre or how so ever a iust man is preventtide of his lyve, he is sure to be savide. And a synner or he that dothe dy in deadly syn withe owtt repenttance shall be dampnyde & go to hell in to everlastinge peane. Ther is no remedie, for god must minister justice. His mercy when we be deyde can nott helpe, for than our fre will is past & goyne, and than is no remedye butt justice. For by his justice he must gyve every man accordinge to his deservynge, for S. Athanasius saith, Who so ever lyvithe well shall go in to everlastinge lyffe, and who so ever lyvithe evilly shall go in to everlastinge fire, and althowghe the prophett Davide saithe thatt the mercye of god do passe all his workes,¹ thes wordes be thus to be understande, thatt yf a man had done, commisside or perpetratide all the synns & trespasses as haith ben commisside & done from the begynnynge of this worlde to this presentt howre, and is sory for his offences, repentyng him selffe for his grett trespasses, willynge to amende, & not to offende god in brekyng his commandementtes, shall be sure to be savide, by the merytt of Christs his deathe [fo. 213v] and passion, recidivation² nottwithestandyng, so be it the saide recidivation be nott perpetratide or done of a presumptuousnes. God is mercifull to all men as longe as thay be lyffinge in this worlde, butt after our sowle is departide from our bodie, he must minyster justice, withe owtt any exception. Nor he dothe acceptt or regarde any mans person; wether he be a kynge or a pore man, a lorde or a begger, a bischoppe or a preste, a clerke, a religius or a seculer person, all is one to him, for like as a man haith lyvide and spentt his tyme, so shall he be rewardyde ather with eternall joye or els with perpetuall peane. This now consideryde with the brevitie of our lyve, and neydes must dye, how soyne and sodenly no man can tell, I do avertysse and councell every man to be in a redines as myche as may be possible. And att least wysse mornyng and evyninge, necessarie itt is for every man to searche his conscience & to reckone withe gode how he haith spentt his lyffe or tyme, or the nyghtt and the day, recognisyng his synnes and askyng god mercie for all his offences, trespasses & negligence done aganst gode and the worlde by wordes, by deades and by evill thowgthes. Itt is a common proverbe, thatt thowghtt is free, butt I assure yow thatt proverbe is falsse, for a man may be dampnyde as well for a evill thowghtt by a willfull consentt as for a evill deade doynge. Lett

¹ Psalm cxlv. 9.

² Backsliding, relapse into sin. *N.E.D.* s.v. gives examples from Lydgate onwards.

every man therfor be sure thatt when he dothe rysse from his bed, butt specially when he dothe go to bedde, to mayke a recknynge and accomptte withe god for his synnes & offences done and mekly to aske "mercie"¹ god.² For when any man dothe go to bedde to tayke his rest, he is in no sewrttie wether he shall ever rysse agayne or never. Many soden thinges & mysfortunes may fall to a man when he is sleapyng, for than he lyethe lyke a childe lackynge witte, wisdom, reasson, discretion & intelligence, nather perceavinge nor knowynge good nor evyll, exceptt sycknes or a supernaturall grace cawsse the contrarie, the which matter I do passe over; and do advertisse every many to considre thatt yff thay have nott seyne or herde say thatt many men have goyne to ther bedde merelye, the wiche dyd never rysse, butt dyd dy sodenlye. Yff suche terrible and fearefull cheawnces do fall diversse tymes and oft, why sholde nott every man feare when he for his owne selffe standithe in no sayve garde? For the matter is dowbtfull, and yitt ther is no dowbtt butt all creatures muste dye, butt as I saide, how we shall dye, when we shall dye, wher we shall dye and on whatt wysse we shall dye no man can tell. Therfor wisdom wolde thatt we sholde prepare for the thyng that we be sure of, and to feare the terriblynes of deathe, for the philosopher saithe of all terrible thinges the most terrible thinge is deathe.³ Christ saide to his father, yff itt were possible to transfer from him the angwishe of deathe, how be it he dyd com-mytte all to the will of his father.⁴ We may perceave by this thatt deathe is fearefull and dolorows. And deathe sparithe nather Kynge, Qwene, lorde, lady, p[rie]st, clerke, pore, nor ryche, yinge nor olde; ther is no remedy butt we must all dye, &c. The matter ensewynge treattithe of hells.⁵

[A BRIEF RULE]

[Ibid., fo. 220]

A Breave rulle veray profitable for all suche to reyde as intende to lyffe a Christian lyffe.⁶

Who thatt desirithe to please god and to atteane any profite and increasse in spirituall lyffe, and att the lengthe to cum unto perfection: first of all lett him detest and abhorre all heresies and scismes, strongly stickynge & humbly submittinge

¹ Parkyn's own punctuation.

² With the preceding passage, cf. *Brief Rule*, *infra*, p. 78.

³ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, iii. vi: 'Now the most terrible thing is death'. The same sentence is cited in *The Boke of the Craft of Dying* in Horstman, ii. 407.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 42; Luke xxii. 42.

⁵ It is omitted from our present selection.

⁶ Detailed parallels in the *Imitatio* are noted *infra*. The passage having most general resemblance to Parkyn's *Brief Rule* is *Imitatio*, iv, ch. vii.

- Catholyke
Churche
- ¶ The lyffe of
Christ
- ¶ Selffe will
- ¶ Choice
- love inordinatte
- him selffe unto the Catholique chirche, for who so ever goethe frome the Catholike churche, yea, thowghe thay seyme to lyffe never so virtuously, yet ar thay parttide & devidyde from god & the company of sanctts. Lett him therfore (holdinge fyrmely the fundation of the rightt & catholyke faithe) buylde theron a good, godly and a wholly lyffe.¹ Lett him serve god, & honour, & call uppon the blisside virgin Marie, the mother of god, and the wholly sancttes and cittizins of hevin, nott negligenttlye or of a drie or un-[fo.220v]-devoutt custome, butt diligenttlye and devouttly. The lyffe of our saveyor Christ, most specially his blisside passion, lett him remembre with a godlye and a thankfull mynde and hertt. The humilitie, the obedience, the meknes, the patience, the resignation and forsakinge of his owne mynde, the myldnes, the bownttifulnes, the chastitie and charitie of his lorde & maister, lett him endeavor himselff withe all his mygtt to follow.
- Lett him remembre, forsake & leave him selffe for gods his sake, in all his vitius desires, and inclinations or dispositions, let him busely persecutte, manfully mortifie, and pull upp by the rootte. All privaitte love, his owne wyll and fantasye, lett him channge itt, and lett him putt it all to gether unto the will of god, so thatt whatt so ever gode will, thatt he will the sayme. And whatt so ever god sufferithe to channce unto him, lett him receave itt gladlie, as the thinge most best for him, wether itt be (as thay say) sweytt or soower.² Lett him cast of and utterly spoille him selffe of sekynge his owne selffe, and his owne choice in all thinges, yea in his good and godly desires, lett him resigne him selffe, and putt all to gether in to the handes of god, desiringe nott his owne will butt gods his will to be done in him.
- Lett him nott cleave by inordinatte affection or love unto any corruptible or mortall creature.³ All the delectations of his senses, all pleassures of the

¹ The foregoing passage suggests that Parkyn was among those in whom the Marian Reaction had inspired genuine fervour.

² For a similar sentence see *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xvii, iii.

³ Detachment from the love of creatures is a common theme of late medieval pietism. Cf. *Imitatio*, ii, ch. viii, v; iii, ch. xxxi, i; Peryn, pp. 39, 64, 69. The point finds striking expression in the prayer copied a few years earlier by Parkyn and now attributed to Bishop Fisher. Cf. *Church Quarterly Review*, July-Sept. 1937, p. 232. Parkyn returns to the notion *infra*, p. 81.

fleshe, lett him utterly forsake and renownce. Lett him be deyde and utterly mortifyde unto the worlde, and as itt were one thatt is blynde and deaffe. Lett him wyshe and desire to se or heare nothings save only thatt which is necessarie or profitable. And whille he refreschithe the bodie with meatts or foode, lett him be veray well warre thatt he do nott over layde, or over burden his bodie & bellie withe to myche eather meatt or drynke.¹ Bothe meatt and drynke lett him tayke moderattelye and soberlye, sekyng no pleassowr or delectation therin, butt yf he fealle any earthely pleassure therin, lett him nott fasten his fantesie uppon itt, nor suffre itt to entre in to his hertt. Yff he be nott lett, lett him dyppe spiritually the morsells thatt he eattithe in the pretius bloode of Christ, lett him draw his drynke owtt of Christ ruddie and rosse reyde wondes.² Homely and comon meatt lett him love, and desire more than deanttie and fyne, for our lorde Jesus dranke vinagre and gall. And lett this be well consideryde, thatt he thatt feadithe with inordinaitte desire or appetitte on the grossest meattes that ar, dothe loysse virteu of trew abstinence: which he losithe nott thatt eattithe delicatte meattes withe owtt inordinatte delitte or pleasure. Wherfor he, whos sensualitie or appetitte is more in apples and watter than in wyne & partriges, dothe more laudable and better absteane yff he forbear apples & water for the love off god, takinge little or nothings of tham, then yff he dyd absteane from wyne and partriges.³

Therfor lett the trew luffer of spirituall lyffe & perfection fightt and contende manfully aganst his sensualitie, denyng alway withe wisdom all suche thinges to the sensuall appetitte, as it dothe inordinattely desire. Yett lett him nott destrow nature and his bodie with intollerable abstinence and with to myche rigowr and sharppnes, thatt he takithe uppon him att the judgmentt of his owne head & pleassowre.⁴ Lett him keappe a meane and

¶ Feading

no[ta]

¶ Inordinaitte
appetite

¹ On gluttony, cf. Rolle, *Contemplations* in Horstman, ii. 79-80 and Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. lxxii.

² On the cult of the wounds of Christ, cf. Horstman, i. 379.

³ Rolle makes the same general point: *Contemplations* in Horstman, ii. 80.

⁴ Excessive self-mortification at the subject's own judgment is often condemned, e.g. in *The Form of Perfect Living* in Horstman, i. 7; Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. lxxvi; *Imitatio*, iii, ch. vii, ii; *The Cloud of Unknowing*, E.E.T.S., ccxviii. 38-9; Peryn, p. 20.

- a constantt discretion in all thinges and submytte him selffe to follow wholsome and good cowncell. Let him nott seake nor require superfluows thinges more then neade, butt be contenttyde with litle. Lett him enclyne nott to vanitie nor curiositie in his apparell,¹ nor in any other thinges. [fo. 221] Hurtfull, dishonest or slawnderows wordes lett him never utter: nether herken unto tham thatt have any suche talke: butt rather seake some meane convenientt to breke off ther nowghttie communication.
- ¶ Apparell
- ¶ Talke
- ¶ lying
- ¶ Flatterye
- ¶ Silence
- ¶ Contention
- ¶ Answer
- ¶ Laughtter
- Lyinge must he abhorre; he must allso exchew all bostinge, and all flatterye. Lett him nott be sharppe or knappyshe in his wordes, but sweytt and pleassanntt or mylde, yett for all thatt lett him nott with his sweytt, affectionatte & plesanntt wordes seake to please any wordlye person. Vayne, folyshe, childishe and idle wordes lett hym utterly refuse to speake. When he may, saviage his obedience and charitie, lett him keape silence. Lett him nott yitt holde his peace to sadly & sowerlye lest suche silence of his myghtt be yrsome and tedius unto other. Butt when he must neades speake, lett him (yf itt may be) utter few wordes & thatt withe grett advyssementt and circumspection. And before he shall speake (callynge for the helpe of god) lett him appontt fymely withe him selffe to speake no more then is necessarie.² Lett him nott lighttlye gayne say any person, nor stiffely contende with wordes; butt when he haith the wittnesside & tolde the trewthe once or twysse, yf itt be nott taken, lett him suffer tham to talke and judge itt as thai lyst, holdinge his peace as thowghe he were ignorantt therof, exceptt ther shold follow any peryll or danger of sowlle by his silence. Lett him usse and accustom to mayke his answer as it were dowbtfully, as yf he sholde say, I suppose itt be so; yf I be nott deceaive, itt is so, &c.
- Lyghtt maneres, uncumly gestures & behavey-oweres and immoderaite lawghtter lett him avoide earnestlye.³ Lett him also avoyde & eschew (as myche as he may) all occasions of offence to any person. Lett him nott inordinattely delytt to be

¹ Cf. Rolle, *On Daily Work* in Horstman, i. 155.

² Cf. *The Form of Perfect Living* in Horstman, i. 25; *On Daily Work* in *ibid.*, i. 317; *Imitatio*, i, ch. x.

³ Cf. *ibid.*, i, ch. xxi, i; Peryn, p. 41.

¶ Attende
no[ta]

in companye, butt lett him love to be aloyne, and beyng alone lett him serve god and tende unto hevinly things, accordinge to the grace thatt god haithe gyven him.¹ Nottwithstandinge when he is in companie lett him be fellow lyke and redie to speake & talke (with discretion) amonge suche as he is in companye withe. Yea, the least losse of tyme thatt is, lett him weighe itt myche and make grett recknyng therof, yett lett him nott thinke, thatt the tyme is lost when he thinkithe uppon gode inwardlye and do nothings owtwardlye.²

¶ Obedience

Lett him preferre nothings before wholly obedience, remembryng thatt the perfitte mortifyinge of his owne will is a sacrifice most acceptable unto god. Itt is better soberly, and withe measure to the glorie of god for obedience, to eatt his meatt, then of his owne heade and will to fast or keappe greatt & harde abstinence of the olde father in wildernes. Whatt thinge so ever is doyne of pure obedience, be itt or seyme itt never so vile, small, or abiectt, god esteemithe it highly and will rewarde it grettlye. Ther is no deyde whatt ever itt be thatt can please god thatt is yoinyde withe disobedience.³ Lett him therfor prompttly and redily with a merye cheare & devoutt hertt obeie (as unto god) and honowr his superiowres, yea, thowghe thai be perhapps unperfectt, and seyme to have many fawttes.⁴ Lett him also obeie his fellows & his inferiores in things lawfull; lett him be alway redie to leave of his godlye and wholly exercises for the deydes of obedience and of charitie. Lett him nott be weddyde unto his owne phantasie and be obstinaitte of mynde, butt lett him preferre wissely (with discretion to the honor of god) the sentence and judgmentt of other.⁵ He must patienttly suffer him selffe to be tawghtt & reprove of other, and thos that do rebuke him, he must answer nott angerly & sharpplye butt sweyttly and gentlie, gladly acknowledgyng his fawtt. Yff he be wrong-

¶ Selffwill

¹ Cf. *Imitatio*, iii, ch. liii, i.

² Cf. *The Form of Perfect Living* in Horstman, i. 19.

³ On obedience, cf. e.g. *Imitatio*, i, ch. ix; iii, ch. xiii.

⁴ Parkyn may well have had in mind his own 'unperfect' superior, Archbishop Holgate, whose marriage he had roundly condemned (*E.H.R.*, lxii. 69, 71-2) and who had been deprived by the Marian government.

⁵ Cf. *Imitatio*, i, ch. ix.

¶ Submission

fully accusyde [fo. 221v] or rebukyde, he must nott prowdly defende or excusse himselffe, but rather (followyng his lorde & master) lett him holde his peace with patience,¹ exceptt perhapps ther sholde follow any grett slawnder by his silence. Lett him submytt and cast him selff downe (in his owne judgmentt) under all creatures: yea, thowghe he have receaide never so grett consolations or gyfftes of god inwardlie or owttwardlie, yett lett him nott therfor beyre his heade any thinge the higher, nor thinke him selffe better then other, nor stande in his owne conceatts, and thinke him selffe somwhatt, when in veray deyde thos gyfftes be nott his, butt be the gyfftes of almightie god.² Lett him thinke nothinge to be his owne but (as itt is in deyde) synne only.

Lett him nott therfor challenge unto him selffe nor usurppe the gyfftes of god, but refownde and surrendre all thinges unto god wholly, and ascrivinge utterly unto him all his good workes. Lett him confesse from his hertt thatt he of him selffe is nothinge, thatt he haith nothinge, he knowithe nothinge, nather can do any thinge. And thus in considerynge thatt he of himselff is nothing, either haith, knowithe, nor can do any thinge, lett him remayne still perfittly meye, preferringe and thinkinge all men better then him selffe.³ For why, yff the most synfull wretches thatt be had receaide thos gyfftes of grace thatt he haith, thay wolde perhapps have lyffide a grett dealle more godlier then he dothe. And planely, yff he were nott continewally defendyde & protectide by the speciall grace of god, he sholde more grevuslye synne and offende then any other. Lett him therfor comptt him selffe most vilest wretche that is,⁴ & unworthie thatt he goethe on the grownde, lett him most diligently mortifie in him selffe all and every affection of vayne glorie. Lett him nott have any vayne appetytte to be knowen, lawdede or cownttide religius or holly of men, butt lett him rather desire to be unknown, to be sett nowghtt by, & to be dispyside & contempnyde.⁵ And lett him seake the

¹ Cf. *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xlvi.

² Cf. Rolle, *Contemplations* in Horstman, ii. 102.

³ On humility, cf. e.g. *Imitatio*, i, ch. ii; Hilton, *Scale*, i. ch. xvi; Peryn, p. 48.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

- favor & grace of god and nott of men. He must lerne to suffre meklye with owtt complantt, murmuration or grutche al iniuries mockes and skornes, fals accusations, slannders, afflictions, trowbles & harmes thatt shall be doyne to him by gods his permission and sufferance, beleavinge undowbttidlye thatt all thos thinges are sentt unto him from allmighttie gode. Therfor lett him nott be grevide, nor tayke indignation, nether beare evill will unto suche thatt so dothe handle him, butt accordinge to the example of his lorde Jesu Christ lett him shew himselffe meake & gentle unto tham. Lett him never speake of ther fautes or imperfections,¹ exceptt veray grett neyde or veray evidentt profite doo compell him. Lett him acknowledge and thinke thatt he can nott be so sore grevide and overtroden of any man, butt thatt he haith deserve for his iniquities and unkyndnes to god a grett dealle more.
- ¶ Meakness
- ¶ Fraude From all frawde, gylle, and deceatt and from all vitius dissimulation lett him utterly absteane. Lett him love all men indifferenttlye in one common & sincere charitie, no man excepttide. Lett him take all and² bretheren & sisternes, all carnall and sensuall love sett apartt, lett him desire & wyshe in his hertt thatt all may cum unto everlastinge lyffe.
- ¶ Charitie
- ¶ Judgmentt He must nott esteame or judge a man after the miserable corruption of his visible fleshe, butt after the incomprehensible dignitie of his invisible sowlle, which is made unto the ymage of god.³ Lett him nott beire a sower or [fo. 222] spittefull hertt towarde any person, butt shewynge a merye cumly cowntenance, he must be gentle and pleasantt unto all persons. The fawttes of other lett hym beyre with pittie and compassion, yett suche as ar directtly aganst gods his honor lett him gladly amende or cawsse to be reformyde and thatt withe charitie. Lett hym hatte the synne in the man, but nott the man for the syne, for god creatide the man, butt the man dyd the synne and not god. Lett him be redie to do good to helpe and cumfurthe every man, but specially his enemyes.
- ¶ Others fawtts
- no[ta]
- ¶ Enemyes

¹ Cf. *Imitatio*, ii, ch. iii.² *Sic* for 'as'.³ Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. lxx. has the general sense, derived from St. Augustine.

people departtide thatt yett abyde peanes in purgatorie, lett him be movide with a singuler pittie and compassion.¹

¶ Estimation

Lett him esteame & tayke every man as it were him selffe: so shall he more redily lamentt ther synnes & calamities and reioce att ther good fortune & prosperities. He must envye no man, detract no man, butt judge well of all men. The

¶ Suspitions

sinistre & evill suspitions that fortune to cum in to his mynde, he must putt tham owtt spedely. He must dispice no man, nor dispaire of no synner, for he thatt is now a wickyd lyffer may by and by withe gods grace be turnyde and becum a good man. Lett him fymely proposse with him selff never to judge any man. The saynges and doynge of others lett him tayke alway to the best sensse & meanyng, beholdyng and hearinge all thinges withe simplicitie and purenesse of hertt.² Suche as ar evill and can nott be well construed, he must lett passe as thai be, yett nott rashely judgyng. Lett him determyne nothinge of a sewrttie of suche thinges. He awghtt to pray for him selffe, the grettest synner that liffethe, and for all other thatt lyffe and do amysse.

¶ Prayer

¶ Adversitie

no[ta]

All adversities and greffes, whatt so thai be, grevinge or peanyng the bodie or sowlle (how or fro whence so ever thay cum) he must receave and tayke tham as from the hande of god and of no other. All suche thinges he must suffer for the love of god withe a obedientt and most patience³ mynde to the ende & uttermost pontt, withe a full, humble hertt, thinkinge verely thatt thos peans & greaffes be most profitable & most convenientt unto his sowlle healthe, thoughe perhapps itt may seame other wysse unto him.⁴ Therfor lett him lawde and gyffe herttie thanks unto god, whiche of his unmesurable love dothe sende thos thinges unto him. Lett him nott be trowblide withe the thinges thatt channce in the worlde, butt lett him considre wysely the highe providence of god in all thinges, with owt the whiche, nott so myche as the

¶ Worldlye
chawnces

¹ Pious Catholics, who had perhaps read More's *Supplication of Souls*, had been much troubled by the abolition of masses for the dead. Parkyn and his friend William Watson soon took advantage of the Marian Reaction to plan a trental of masses for the souls of their friends (*Trans. Hunter Archaeol. Soc.*, vi, pt. vi, pp. 282-3).

² Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. lxiv, lxv, lxvii has broad analogies with the foregoing passage.

³ *Sic* for patiente.

⁴ Cf. e.g. *Imitatio*, ii. ch. xii, viii.

Ps. 54

leaffe fallithe from the tree. And unto the sayme divine providence lett him commytt him selffe & all his assuridly, and thatt withe a good & humble trust in god his good lorde. In all cheawnceys and adventures of thinges lett him fymely & surely leane unto his mercye, alway rennyng unto him for helpe by prayer, as the psalmist admonishethe, saynge, *Jacta super dominum curam tuam*, Cast all thy cayre uppon thy lorde and he will nowryshe and keappe the.¹ Also thapostle S. Peter exhortithe us thatt we sholde cast all our cayre uppon him, for he takythe caire for us. Yea, thowghe he be destitutte of all inwarde consolation & be never so tormoylide & vexyde with most grevus temptations, yett lett him nott leave his wholly² purposse, butt lett him abyde constantt with a good trust and a full faithe in our lorde, sekyng no other vayne solace to comfortt nature, or relyve his greaffe.

¶ Wickyde
Spyritts

no[ta]

Be thay never so abhominable, fowlle & horrible thinges thatt the wickyde spiritt dothe cast in to his mynde, he must sett tham att nowghtt, turnyng his inwarde thoughtt and conceiptt spedelye fro tham. [fo 222v] For suche thinges shall he better maister and overcum by contemnyng and spittinge att tham, then yf he sholde tayke heyde unto tham or thinke on tham, or els wolde dispute or contende withe tham. He must nott thinke thatt he so dothe commytte any synne thatt he awghtt to be confesside of unto the p[rie]st by suche fowlle fansies whiche do utterly displeasse and myslyke him, and doost cast tham of by and by. His synnes thatt he haith committide, thos awghtt he to confesse unto his gostlie father, butt the temptations unto the which he dothe nott consentt, be no synes doone, for suche spirituall filthines dothe nott pollutte or defille his sowlle, yff thay do nott please and delytte him, nor be not receavyde of him by consentt of hertt.³ To fealle evill within him selffe is one thinge, and to consentt unto evill is a other. Veray many wholly sancttes for the most partt feltt oft tyme in ther fleshe vehementt motions of vyce and synne, butt thay in

¹ Psalm lv. 22 (Vulgate, liv. 23). *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xvii is on this text.

² Holy.

³ Similar to Rolle, *The Remedy against the Troubles of Temptations* in Horstman, ii. 107 and to Hilton, *Scale*, ii, ch. xi. In general, both these writers stress the theme of hope and divine mercy.

will and reasson resistide and withstoide tham. Lett him nott omytte to receave the blisside sacramentt, nor leave any other wholly exercise for any inwarde dereliction, darknes, or gostlie povertie, nor for any extreme afflictione with the which (god so ordeinyng it) he is sore trowblide.¹ The exercises then in suche tyme of trowble & calamitie be unsavorie unto him and laborius and also peanefull, butt yf he doo whatt lyethe in him, thay be unto almightie god most acceptable.

¶ Sanctimonie

He must nott thinke thatt the whollynes² and trew sanctimonie of a good lyffe standithe in this: thatt a man fealithe inwerdlie grett cumfortt and swettnesse.³ Nor he must nott reken thatt veray trew devotion is thatt sensible tendernes of hertt by the whiche a man soyne brestithe owtt in weapinge. For this devotion bothe heritykes and heathen people have and feale oft tyme. The trew devotion is a good will wherwith a man offerithe him selffe redely unto the wirshippe, the honowr, and the pleassowr of god. And this remainithe still & endewrithe thowghe the hertt be never so drie & the mynde never so baren. Lett him nott therfor inordinattely desire inwarde swettnesse, butt lett him be as redie to forgoe and lacke itt as to have itt. Yff god wyll sende him spirituall cumfurthe, lett him than receave with all meaknes and with herttie thankes suche divine consolation and comforth of god, butt lett him tayke good heyde, thatt he abuse nott the gyfftes of god to his owne pleassure. Nother lett him nott rest therin. He must be inwardly as pure, symple, free and quiett, when he is so visitide bownttfully of god, as thowghe he feltt no suche thinge, for he awghtt nott to rest in the gyfftes of god, butt only in gode him selffe. Lett him knowledge him selffe unworthie of the least gyfte of god.

¶ Spirituall
comforth

Yff he can nott be attentyffe enowghe whille he dothe synge or say, he must nott be to mucche discouragide or pensyffe in his hertt therfor, for yf he offred a good will unto god, quiettlye doynge thatt

¹ On these points and the succeeding ones, compare *Imitatio*, iv, ch. x; Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. xxxiii and, more especially, *ibid.*, ii, ch. xli. Cf. also Hilton, *Treatise written to a Devout Man*, ch. xv; *The Remedy* in Horstman, ii. 115; Peryn, p. 8.

² Holiness.

³ Cf. *Imitatio*, iii, ch. viii: 'a man's worthiness is not to be estimated by the number of visions and comforts which he may have'.

whiche lyethe in him, diligentlie & reverentlie applyinge him selffe to his prayers and dewttie, thowghe he be destractide aganst his will, yet is his prayer which he makithe with distraction, fructfull & thankfull receaive of god.¹ Therfor he sholde nott be disquietyde, impatientt & scrupulows butt lett him meaklye resigne and committe him selffe wholly unto god, for he may be devouttly glade in god, thatt he is so good a lorde & so mercifull, thatt he bowntifullie and genttillie doethe beare with us, thowghe whille we praye we thinke uppon many vayne & uncomelye thoughttes or thinges. And lett him say [fo. 223] unto god, O lorde thow knowest how many distractions ther be of my hertt.² Be mercifull unto me, most vile synner. Good lorde Jesu, answeare, satisfie and supplie for me. Off infirmitie and frealtie I am unstable, and am scateride. Make me wholle, good lorde, and I shall be stable. Butt thow most mercifully (as yett) doest beare with me, all unstable and scateride, for thu artt gentle, mylde & patientt.

¶ Redinge of scripture

no[ta]

He must love well to reide wholly wrytte, butt he must sett more by, & use prayer than redinge.³ Lett him nott rede to myche at once, lest he withe to longe redinge doo overpresse his spiritte more than refreshe itt.⁴ Lett him receave alway the worde of god withe a hungrie mynde, of whom so ever itt be declaride, be itt spoken withe never so simple and homely wordes. Yff he can nott devouttly receave itt, lett him accuse & humble himselffe, beleavinge thatt the fawtt is in him selffe and nott in the precher. Lett him be redie and desire oft to receave the blisside sacramentt to the glorie and lawde of gode. Butt yf he can nott receave it sacramentallye so offt as he wolde, lett him nott trouble him selffe therfor, butt lett hym commytt all to the will of god, and quiettly prepaire himselffe to receave it spirituallie, for ther can no man lett him butt he may (by a wholly desire and godly longynge) receave itt every day spiritually; yea, and thatt veray oft in one day yf he wyll.

Att eventyde or nyghtt lett him exactly ransacke & also discusse him selffe thrughelye,

¹ Cf. Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. xxxiii.

² On distractions, cf. Rolle, *Six Things in Prayer* in Horstman, i. 301; *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xlviii, v; Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. xxxiii; Peryn, p. 91.

³ Cf. *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xxvi, title.

⁴ Cf. Peryn, p. 6.

how tyme is
spentt

¶ Mornyng

¶ Dreame[s]

¶ Synnes

no[ta]

callynge to mynde and remembrance how he haithe spentt his time, specially thatt day, and whatt offences he haithe committide that day. Lett hym aske mercy of god, proposynge by the helpe of his grace to amende him selffe. Than laying his bodie unto rest, withe chastitie in his bedde, lett him (yf he can) fall on sleappe even as he haithe his wholly meditations & lovelye aspirations unto god, even as he prayethe.¹ In lyke maner in the mornyng when he shall arysse, as soone as he awakithe, lett him accustom to turne his fyrst thowghtt & cogitation lovingly unto god, thatt he may be aptt to receave his visitacion and grace. Butt yf he by reasson of confusion or hevines of hertt can nott frearely² lyfftt upp his mynde unto god, or else yf he in his sleappe (reasson than beyng nott att liberttie) haithe hade any fowlle and uncleane dreames, lett him nott be overcum withe to myche sorow therfor, butt as soyne as sleappe is passide and he haithe the usse and fredome of reasson agayne, lett him deteste and abhorre suche filthinesse, and have truste and confidence in the mercy of our lorde, bearinge patienttlye the greaffe that he fealithe hereof.³

He must exchew & avoyde withe all diligence & indevoure nott only the grett synnes, butt also the lesser and smalle synnes, for excepe he will flee whatt so ever dothe displeasse god, or lettithe the luffe of god in him, he can nott cum to and opteane the veray purenes and trew peace of the hertt. Yitt lett him nott dispaire or be discomfortyde when he dothe fall in to any synne, nor lett him nott flee or shone the presence of god. And beyng all dowbttfull and hevie, lett him nott musse to myche uppon his offence, butt lett him withe a trust in the grett mercy of god turne his hertt mekely unto him, and intreatte & talke withe him of his iniquitie and unkyndnes, swettly and devouttlye lamentynge him selffe before him. Lett hym considere well his bottomlesse myserie and vyllenesse, and also the unmeasurable mercy and pittie of god, which can nott (in maner) chosse, butt succowr & pardon thatt sowlle that is trewly repentantt and dothe turne wholly from all synne. For a full punyshe-

¹ Cf. *On Daily Work* in Horstman, i. 151-2.

² *Sic*; freely.

³ Cf. *Contemplations* in *ibid.*, ii. 97-8.

mentt & purgation, amendes and satisfaction of his offenceys and fawttes, lett him offre unto god the father the most wholly liffe & conversation, [fo. 223v] the most bitter passion and deathe of his deare beluffyde sonne Jesu. Lett him lovinglie and devouttie aske of our saveyor Christ, thatt he vouchesave to washe hym perfittely pure and clene withe the pretius bloode thatt he shedde for him. The whiche thinge whan he haith done, lett him then be of good cumforthe, as thowghe he had never offendyde god. And for suche fawtts and venialls thatt he can by no meyne overcum or eschappe, lett him nott be to fearefull or scrupulows, butt committe tham unto the grett mercy of god.¹ And resignynge him selffe unto gods pleassure, lett him keappe him selffe in meaknes, in tranquillitie, in patience and in longe sufferance, yea, thowghe he fall by frealtie every day a hundreth, yea, a thowsande tymes,² lett him so offtt withe a constantt hoppe of forgyffnes arysse agayne as he dothe fall. Lett him entende and purposse and do whatt he can to amende and to be more waire and lyffe better.

¶ Frealltie

¶ Gods his glorie

Yett for al that, he must not put all his trust in his good purposse & his indevoire, butt in the only goodnes of god, and in the helpe of his grace, which will never faille tham that doo all that lyes in tham to doo. In all his deades, wordes and thoughttes, yea, and in omissions, lett him seake syncerely the laude and glorie of god, when he dothe purposse to doo, to speake, to thinke, or to omytte any thinge, lett him examin and searche diligenttlye whatt itt is thatt movithe him to doo or to leave thatt thinge. Lett him considre well, wether he sekithe therin gode or his owne selffe. Yffe he perceave thatt he sekithe him selffe, lett him leave itt spedelye and denye him selffe, in followynge god only in his entente and in all his desire. He owghtt to be so well ordrede inwardlye in him selffe thatt god myghtt be to him the ende, or all thinge in every thinge. And lett him se, know and love god in all things: and love all

¶ Love

¹ On temptation, despair, and scruple, cf. *The Remedy* in Horstman, especially ii. 108-9; also *Imitatio*, iii, ch. xxxv, lvii; Peryn, p. 44.

² Cf. Hilton, *Scale*, i, ch. xxxiii: 'though thou fall another time into the same, yea, an hundred times, a thousand times, yet do as I have said, and all shall be well'.

¶ Works

creatures in god, considerynge tham in the most noble sortt and maner of consideration; thatt is to say, as thai thatt issewyde owtt of the highe majestie of god as owtt of ther originall. All his workes and exercises, lett him commende tham unto the godlie and divine wyll of Christe, to be amendyde and made perfitte. And lett him offre the sayme also unto our lorde Jesu, or to god the father, to his everlastinge praysse and for the healthe of the wholle Church, in the union of the most wholly workes and exercises of the sayme his lorde Jesu Christ. For yf he thus do, then thes sayme workes & exercises of his, which of tham selffes be vylle and unperfectt, schall be most noble and excedinge acceptable before god. For of the workes & exercises of Christ (unto the which thay be ioynide and made one) thay shall tayke unspeakable worthinesse and dignitie, evin as a droppe of watter thatt is myxtt & unityde with wyne receavithe the excellentt collowr and tayste of the wyne.¹ All thinges which grevithe him or afflictithe or peanithe him, wether thai be grett or smalle, inwarde or owtwarde, lett him offre tham in lyke maner unto god for a everlastinge laude, and for the salvation of all men, in the union of the passion and sorowes of Christ, thatt by the passion and peans of Christ, unto the which thai be knytt, thay may take therby divine nobilitie & inestimable worthinesse.

¶ Affliction

¶ Motions

¶ Inspiration

He must nott be rashe, to headlynge and trowblesome in suche thinges as he haithe to do, nather he must nott be bownde unto tham by to myche gredines or immoderate affection, as he were captive therunto. He sholde nott follow the importune & vehementt motions and vyolence of his mynde, butt lett him be rewlyde by reason, and be lorde [fo. 224] over him selffe and his workes. Lett him observe and marke well godly inspirations and the will of god in him selffe, and lett him gladly follow & obey gode, thatt spekithe withe in him. Lett him wisely eschew whatt so ever thinge thatt with in him selffe lettithe² the puritie, the

¹ An old and well-known simile. Cf. St. Bernard, *De Diligendo Deo*, ch. x: 'as the water-drop poured into a large measure of wine seems entirely to lose its own nature and to take both the taste and the colour of wine . . . so must all human feeling toward the Holy One be self-dissolved in unspeakable manner'.

² Hinders.

¶ Quiett of mynde
 ¶ Passions
 ¶ Cayres
 ¶ Things temporall
 no[ta]

liberttie and tranquillitie of his mynde. The inordinatte passions and affections of wraithe, concupiscence, feare, joye, sorow, love, and hatte he must expell utterly from him.¹ He must away all unresonable & vayne scruples of his conscience. Lett him nott combre his mynde with superfluows cayres. All suche thinges as ar nott commyttide unto his chearge and belong nothings unto him he must commytt and leave tham utterly to god. And lett him nott be carefull for temporall & owttwarde things. Finally pullynge away and turnyng bothe his thougtht & affection from all frealle and worldly creatures, lett him turne him selffe inwarde, that is to say, lett him gether him selffe within him selffe and ther attende unto god. Lett him, I say, busely call home his thougtht and mynde unto god. And lett him marke well and reverenttly beholde his presence in every place, for god is all wholle, undevidyde every wheyre. Lett him talke with him by inwarde prayer with owtt werynes, tastinge godly desires and burnyng aspirations towarde him.

¶ Thowght
 no[ta]

He must learne to leave the multitude and medlynge with meny thinges and thinke uppon one, and cleave unto thatt one onely. Thus² turnyng of his thougtht inwarde to him selffe is veray necessarie for him. Lett him nott discowraige him selffe, nor leave his good hoppe, becawse he fealithe him selffe so unstable,³ and thatt itt is so harde for him to keape his thougtht stedfastlye uppon god, butt lett him labowr withe perseverance, callinge his mynde and thougtht continewally to god. And as soyne as this good custom shall be stedefast withe continewance in him, then shall he redelye with owtt any labor thinke uppon god and godly things. Lett him sett before the eies of his mynde the lovely and most amiable ymage of his lorde Jesu Christ, god and man, hangyng uppon the crosse, and putte the sayme inwardly and depely in himselffe. Lett him also salutte & wirshippe withe grett devotion the most worthie wondes (thatt never sholde be forgotten) of his saveyor Christ; lett him evin drown him selffe all to gether in tham. He

¹ Cf. *Imitatio*, i, ch. vi; iii, ch. xi; *et passim*.

² *Sic*, probably for this. Cf. *infra*, p. 83, l. 22.

³ This linking of discouragement and 'unstableness' (Rolle's term) appears in *Contemplations* in Horstman, ii, 86-7.

- ¶ Wondes of Christ
- ¶ Ymag[es]
- ¶ Inwarde Sightt
- ¶ Absence
- no[ta]
- ¶ Aspirations breves or[?ationes]
- sholde withe this or some other ymage of the passion of Christ expell and putt owtt of his hertt & mynde all ymages and similitudes of temporall thinges, and putt owtt of memorye all strange phantasies & unprofitable thowghttes & cogitations, as one naille drivithe owtt an other.¹ Lett him be alway (as myche as is possible) turnyde inwarde,² and dwell (as itt were) within him selffe, callynge his mynde away and ryddinge itt from all worldly thinges, directinge & settinge his inwarde sightt purely and peasseably uppon god (whiche is in him verely presentt) & talkinge swettlye and delectable withe him. Lett him comptt itt plane miserie, veray infelicitie & wretchidnes to be away or absentt never so litle tyme from his lorde god, which is the highe and uncheangeable goodnes and felicitie, whiche is the ryver and the bottomlesse deapthe of inestimable pleassures and joyes. But thatt he may laboure and applie the better this inwarde turnynge of his thowghtt, he must learne by hertt some sweytt and love³ aspirations⁴ by the whiche he may, wether he go or rest, ioyne & cowple him selffe unto god by the oft repiticion of tham. We call aspirations breave & shortt prayers lyke dartes, full of godly affection, which we caste [fo. 224v] (as it were) lovely⁵ att god, as when we say, O good Jesu.⁶ O gentle Jesu. O sweytt Jesu. O my deare beluffide. O the most deare beluffide of all beluffyde. O my luffely love. O the swettnes of my hertt. O the lyffe of my sowlle. When shall I please the in all things? When shall I be perfecttly mortifiede unto my selffe and unto all creatures? When shall ther be nothyng alyve in me, butt thow only? Have mercy uppon me, I besuche⁷ the, have mercye uppon me and helpe me. Lo, good lorde, I

¹ Vivid mental images of the Passion are several times advocated in the Rolle writings, especially in *Contemplations* (Horstman, ii. 103). Cf. other works in *ibid.*, i. 83 *seqq.*, 112 *seqq.* In such passages the images are presented with great realism.

² On 'introversion' see Peryn, p. 31, and *infra*, p. 83.

³ *Sic* for lovely.

⁴ Peryn appends 'aspirations' to each of his exercises and explains their use in similar terms, pp. xxiv, 21, 79.

⁵ I.e. lovingly, the adverbial use then being common.

⁶ Such ejaculations are common with the Rolle group. For sequences like the present cf. *A Talking of the Love of God* in Horstman, ii. 346 *seqq.*

⁷ *Sic*, presumably for besече.

salutte & honowr thy ruddie wondes; drowne me all to gether in tham, thatt I may be made all to gether clene, and may be as itt were dro[n]ken with thy love. O my lovede, my god. O my delectable begynnyng. O amiable depthe. O the clere shyninge lightt of my inwards. O my most joyfull & my onely goodnes, when shall I veray ferventtlye love the? When shall I be knytt veray stedfastlye and stronglie unto the? Go to, good lorde, vouchesaffe to shoote my hertt thurgh with the dartt of thy love. Vouchesaffe to knytte and ioigne me unto the withe owtt any meane bitwix us, and to mayke me one spiritt and gost withe the.

¶ Introversion

Suche maner of aspirations awghtt to be caste furthe mekely & myldlye withe owtt violence for harmynge of the heade. Nor itt is nott necessarie to speake tham by mowthe, exceptt he perceave his devotion be stirride and encreasside by suche vocall prayer by mowthe. This maner of prayer all men do testifie to be the most effectuall and most fructfull amonge other. Planely yf this exercisse of this introversion or turnynge of his thowghtt of inwarde prayer & holly aspiration be continewyde, with diligentt mortification, a man shall att the lengthe opteane a pure, a simple, a cleane, a free mynde, & hertt elevatide and lyfftide upp above all corruptible creatures, and stedfastlie knytt and cleavinge unto god.¹ And so in the unitie of the spiritt he shall reste withe god and com to the heightt of perfection. For he beyng lyfftide upp above all the fowrmes and shappes of creatures, by most pure love, adownyde withe the highe sapience & highe knowledge of this misticall divinitie, he shall be ravisshide as itt were in to gode, and most blissidelye swalowyde upp all to gether in him, and so shall he fynde evin in this worlde a veray paradisise and the kyngdome of god. He shall be, I say, admittide to thatt divine onynge² or union which exceadithe all understandinge, wherby when beyng one spiritt withe god, he shall be all gode lyke and the wholly gost shall lyffe in him. Thus after this maner, transfformyde superessentially as he liffide in the wholly aspostills, whille thay were here in this exille or strannge cuntree of this worlde, he thatt redithe thes presentt thinges, lett him so reade

¶ Union

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 68, n. 3.

² Peryn, pp. 69, 88, uses 'oneing'.

- ¶ Admonition
no[ta]
- exemplum¹
¶ Crafft or
Facultie²
- ¶ Prayer
- ¶ diligenter
aspecta
- ¶ Mortification
- tham thatt he fymely do purposse (by the helpe of gods his grace) to expresse tham in his lyffe & maneres, or els the redinge theroff shall profytt him litle or nothinge. Lett him endevoire him selffe daly to mortifie in him selffe more and more all propriete, that is to say, all his owne will and sekinge of hym selffe, wherin nature reflectithe & turnithe unto it selffe, and sekithe itt selffe & his owne commoditie. He must also endevoire besilye to rootte owtt of his hertt all vitius passions and sinfull affections. And thowghe he feylle in him selffe grevus immortification, thowghe he fantt and fall veray offtt, thowghe he sholde be att striffe & warre aganst him selffe many yeares, yett lett him not dispeire nor be trowblide therwithe, for he thatt dothe learne any handie crafft or facultie, he must labowre a grett whylle or he can³ itt perfittelye. Butt and yff he stedfastlie abidinge this maner of wrestlynge or striffe, chance to die or he cum to perfection, he shall never the lesse be blisside of god and shall be receavyde [fo. 225] in to the everlastinge joye of his lorde. Therfor lett him aske, seyke and knocke mekelye and continewallye att the gatte of god, whiche is most bownttful & most liberall, for by prayer shall he receive att tyme convenientt whatt so ever shall be necessarie for him to please god. Yea, he shall receive evin veray god him selffe, and thatt after a maner most excellentt. For planely lett him beleave whatt and how he luste, lett him turne him selffe wether he will, he shall never be able to profytte, excepe he studie and endeavor withe continewall labowr & diligence to dye unto all vice, and to be mortifyde to all creatures. And yett not withstandinge, he must labowre here in suche sortt, thatt he putt his trust and confidence in the only mercy and grace of god, and nott in his owne endevoire and labowre. For in trew mortification and resignation lyethe the veray trew and most plesannt lyffe of all. The whiche the father, sone and wholly gost, one god, vouchesaffe to granntt us, whiche is blisside, lawdide, and praysside, worldes everlastinge, Amen.

¹ Cf. e.g. Horstman, i. 134, 138.

² Hilton constantly uses the analogies of 'mastery' and 'craft'.

³ I.e. ere he knows.

[THE THIRTEEN PRECEPTS]¹

Here after followithe .13. preceptes necessarie
for him thatt entendithe to lyve a contemplatyve
lyffe

The
first
preceptte

Sensualitie

The .2.
preceptt

J Talke

J Lawghtter

¶ The 3 preceptt

Frealle
creatures

¶ The .4.
preceptie

¶ Will of gode

For the love of Jesu Christ, whiche sufferde full herde peanes for the, renunce and forsayke all delectations of thy sennes, as when thou desirest to see, to heare, to smell, to tast, to touch, or to speake any thing,² remembre thatt here in this owghttest to follow or obey nott sensualitie thatt sodenly movithe the, butt reason and god, thatt spekythe in the. Yea, be thou redye and contentt (as the pleasure & ordinance of god) to lacke and forgo the gostlye pleasures or comforttes of the soule. And when thou artt erectide with gostlie cumfurthe and inward sveyttnes, beware thou do nott ryst therein, or abuse itt unto thy owne pleasure. Thy sightt, thy hearynge and thy tounge kepe thou veray diligentlie, thatt thou turne nott unto vayne and unprofitable thinges. Thou must be wonderfull wysse and waile in thy talke, thatt thou utter no mo wordes, nor no other wysse then is convenientt; lett thy talke be shortt, symple & quiett. Ordre diligentlie and kepe well all the membres of thy bodie. Inordinate lawghter & all lightnes of behaveyor & maners exchew. Thou must cleave to no creature by any inordinate affection, butt thou must dye unto all fraile and corruptible creatures, and lett thy mynde be free from them, for in suche maner of deathe, and in suche libertie thou lyest hydde the most trewe and most joyfull & swetest lyffe of all. Al synfull passions, all vitious affections, thy owne will, and the sekynge of thy selfe slea and destroye diligentlie by the wholle and perfectt renuncynge and resygnynge of thy selfe. Love singularlye well the will of god and desire itt ever to be done, and submytt thy selfe all to gether to itt, so exacttlye, thatt whatt so ever god will, thou wilt the sayme thy selfe. Every where and in every thinge seake rather

¹ Numerical titles [e.g. *Six Things in Prayer* (Horstman, i. 300); *Nine Points* (*ibid.*, ii. 375)] and numbered lists of precepts occur several times in the Rolle writings. Cf. *supra*, p. 60, n. 8. The *Nine Points*, formerly attributed to Rolle, has analogies with Parkyn's *Thirteen Precepts* and may have been known to our author.

² *Sic* for thinge.

¶ The .5.
preceptt

¶ no[ta] bene

¶ Complantt

¶ diligenter
aspecta

¶ .6. preceptt

¶ Submission

the lawde and honowr of gode then thy owne commoditie. In all things what ever do cheance or fortune, remembre and loke wyssely uppon the highe providence of god, and so committe the and thyne saffelye & withe a good trust unto our lorde, beyng sure thatt he takythe caire for the. Whatt ever adversitie or trowble do cum (wether itt be inwarde or owttwarde) receave itt as att the hande of god, beleavinge for a sewrttie thatt he haith sentt itt for thy grett profytte and healthe. Therfor beare itt patienttlye unto the uttermost pontt, thankynge our lorde & praysinge hym, by whos sufferance and ordinance itt so cheawncyde. Mayke thu no complantt (fo. 225v) withe impatience to no man, nor trowble nott thy selffe for any iniuries or wronges doyne unto the, butt callynge well to thy remembrance thy iniquitie and unkyndnes unto god, thynke thy selffe worthy to be rebukyd, to be chyden, to be contemnyd, to be vexyd, to be mockyd, yea, to be troden under the featt of all men. Why artt thu so hevie and so discowragyd for mens sayinges or temptations? Lett men thinke & say of the whatt thay wyll, lett the worlde be woode,¹ and the devill be as madde and rage uppon the, as god shall permitte and suffre, butt in the meyne tyme mekely and constanttly leane or truste unto god and keape the the peace and rest of thy hertt withe silence. Yff thou doest well, weighe, remembre, and thinke how unworthy, how bytter, and sharppe evils thy creatowr and redemer Jesus Christ suffride for the, thou shalt with veray good will beare patienttly any maner of peans or greaffes whatt so ever thai be. Thrust downe and sett thy selffe in thi owne conceatte under all creatures, consideringe thy owne vilenesse, and thatt thou artt nowghtt, or nothings of thy selffe. Yff thou thinke thi selffe to be owghtt, when indeyde thou artt nowghtt, yf thou esteame folishely in thy owne conceatte thy deades or exercises, planely then artt thou excedinge prowde, and thou stynkes before god. Whatt goodnesse so ever thou haist is itt gods and nott thyne. Tayke heyde therfor, thatt thou usurppe nott to thy selffe thatt whiche is gods. Tayke heyde thatt thou reioce nott folishelye therin and stande in thi owne conceatte, and so displeasse god therin

¹ Mad, rabid: OE. wód.

- highlye. Judge and reckin thy selffe unworthye of the least gyfft of gode. Levinge thy owne will and thy owne mynde, gladly do and follow thow the wyll and mynde of a other in suche things as ar lawfull. Obey thow most redely and prompttlye always, for thatt thinge thatt is doyne of pure obedience is most acceptable to god. And contrarie wysse, god defiethe, detestithe and cursithe whatt so ever itt be thatt is doyne withe disobedience. Be contentyde withe few thinges thatt are veray symple and pure, accordeinge to thexample of our lorde Jesu, and of his mother Marie. Love nott prowde vanitie in thy apparell, nor deanttie delacie¹ in thy fare. And unkynd and unthankefull sholdest thow be, yf thow woldest murmure or grudge at meatt or drynke, thatt semythe to the nott so swette or exquisytte as thow woldest have, sithe thy lorde god Jesus Christ dranke azell and gall. Yff thow lacke or wantt thos thinges thatt seme neadefull, laude thow god and have confidence in him, which can nott forsayke thos thatt ar his, thowghe he suffre tham some tyme to be pynchede withe neyde for ther grett profitte. Love all men sinceyrely as thy bretherne or systerne, by cawsse thay be adornede and bewttifyde with the most noble ymage of god. Wyshe & desire from the hartt rootte the salvation of all men. Schew and offre unto all men (butt specially unto thye enemyes and persecutors) a amiable & merye countenance, and gyffe tham gentle wordes, withe the swettnes of wholly charitie, healyng and qwenching with in thy hertt all bytternesse of thy malincolie stomocke. Be redie to helpe and confortt all men: have compassion and take pittie uppon tham thatt be in sorow or affliction, and uppon tham thatt do synne. Reioce and be as gladde for the virtues of other as for thy owne. Comptte others mens myserie as thyne, esteamynge and recknyng every man evin as thi selffe. Despice thow no persone. Rashe judgментtes and nowghttie suspitions withe grett diligence beatt thow owtt of thi mynde & hartt. Accustome to judge well [fo. 226] of all men. The sayngs and doyngs of other with a symple mynde and single hertt judge after the best sortt. Preferre all men and tayke tham for better
- ¶ The .7.
preceptt
- ¶ Will
- ¶ Obedience
- ¶ The .8.
preceptte
- ¶ Apparell
- The .9. preceptte
- ¶ love
- ¶ Charitie
- The .10. preceptt
- ¶ Judgmentt

¹ *Sic*, presumably for delicacie.

¶ The .11.
precept

¶ The .12.
precept

¶ Wholly talk

¶ The. 13.
p[re]c[ept]

then thu artt thy selffe, and thynke it with all thy hertt. Thynke thyselffe most unkynde and most vile. Say to thyselffe, say also to god, I am nott worthie to go uppon the earthe. O, yff thou were so godlye wysse, as thou sholdest be, how gladlye wolde thou do all drudgerie and toyle for gods his sayke! How gladly woldest thou be a servantt and slave to all men!¹ For thi lorde Jesus Christ toyke uppon him the shappe of a servantt, and beyng made veray man he wasshide his disciples feytt. Studie and endeavor to please god and nott man. Desire thou more to be dispisside & sett att nowghtt then to be praysside and wirshippide. Have in thy mynde alway sum godly and wholly cogitations, and remembre every where the presence of god, thatt he is ther with the, and therfor have thou with him some sweytt and wholly talke, wether thou fealest devotion or no. Thes wordes thatt follow, yf thou remembre oft, may helpe the myche to recollectt and gether² thy spiritts to gether and to mynde and conside well and reverentlye the presence of gode: O my lorde god, thou artt alway presentt withe me, thou dwellest & abidest in the bothome of my sowlle. Whatt so ever thinge itt be, thatt is not good, or for god, or helpinge the to god, passe nott grettly uppon³ itt. Reken thy selffe to have litle to do therwithe, for thus by wholly introversion, or inturnynge, thou mast be able to gyffe thy mynde and the better intende⁴ with a free hertt unto god him selffe. And certanlye this same one thinge is onely necessarie, the whiche yf thou will obteane, thou maiste labowr, endeavour and doo continewally all thatt in the lyethe. Butt yett must thou despeire of thy selffe of thy labowr and endeavor, and putt all thy wholle hoppe & trust only in gode, in his only mercy and goodnes, and in the only helpe of his grace, for withe owtt god, thou can do nothinge butt synne. Reyde oft thes litle shortt rewles and examyne oft thy lyffe & maneres by tham &c.⁵

¹ Parkyn has interrogation-marks after these two sentences.

² *Sic*.

³ Pass upon, i.e. care for, regard. Cf. *N.E.D.* s.v. pass, x. 23b, noting the example in Hoby, 1561.

⁴ I.e. attend. Cf. examples in *N.E.D.* s.v. intend, 6, 8.

⁵ A not uncommon mode of conclusion in Tudor times; it does not necessarily imply that the treatise is incomplete.

MICHAEL SHERBROOK

THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES

[Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 5813, fo. 5, p. 1]¹

A Copy of a MSS wrote about 1591 concerning the Destruction of Religious Houses in England.

St. Nicholas
1745 Dec. 6.

THE FALLE OF RELIGIOUSE HOWSES, COLLEGES,
CHANTREYS, HOSPITALLS, &c.

For so much as the Religious Houses, Colleges, Chantries, Churches, Chapels, Hospitals, and all other Houses for the maintenance of the poor was in building and founding by the Space of a 1000 years and above; that is, ever since the first receiving of the Christian Faith in England; for then the building of them first began, and so continued until the time of King Henry 8 in whose Time they were all suppressed, dissolved, overthrown and spoyled; it is necessary to know, whether that the Building or the Overthrow and Spoil of them, was better for the Common weale of England: for if the Building of them was more Commodious for the Commons of England, than their Spoyl and Destruction; then must it follow that the Commons of England have more Cause to praise the Builders and Founders thereof than the Destroyers and Spoylers thereof; and greatly to lament the overthrow thereof.

Therefore if there was no other thing to perswade Men to think that the Building of them was far better than the Destruction thereof, yet the long time of their Building with the Maintainance thereof from time to time for so long space, must needs perswade Men that the standing thereof was more necessary and profitable for the Common Weale of England, than their Overthrow: or else it must needs be granted that the Governours and all other the Inhabitants and Commons of the same Realm, were very simple Persons, that in all that long Space could not with long Experience find out the Discomodity that came by the Maintainance thereof:

¹ The ms is foliated and paginated; in each case henceforth the first reference is to the folio, the second to the page.

for he is a very simple person that will go about to maintain a Thing to his own Hindrance; much more to build or make a Thing to hinder and damnify the Comon Weale: But seeing it appeareth very plainly by antient Histories written from time to time by the persons in every age, that the Acts, Doings and Government [5v (2)] of all the Governours of those Ages and Times, both in Spiritual, Temporal and Civil Causes, both in time of Peace and War, have declared that the said Governours were no whit inferiour, neither in Learning, wisdom or political Government, to the Governours in our time; yea and in some points far excelled them, specially in Virtue, godly Living and great Devotion toward God, and cheifly the very Destroyers and Spoylers of the said Houses.

Therefore read the Chronicles and temporal Lawes of this our Realm of England entreating of the Matters both Spiritual and Temporal, done and practised within this Realm, from the time of the 1st Christian King, Lucius,¹ until this Day; and compare the Lives and Doings of all our Forefathers with our Lives and Acts, since the Beginning of the Reign of King Henry 8, and then thou shall see who is worthy to carry the Bell away for well-doing.²

For the Estate of the Realm hath come to more Misery since King Henry 8 his time, than ever it did in all the time before: If it be a Misery to have more Theives, Whores, Extortioners, Usurers, and contentious persons striving the one against another in suits of Law, and to be short, far more Beggars than ever was before. If thou will not beleive me, see the Records both of the Spiritual and temporal Courts, that recordeth the Punishments of all such offenders, and the manifold Actions put in suit in all times past before Henry 8 and all the times since untill this day; and also the Estatutes made for the Reformance of all such Vice, and no whit amended thereby, but daily waxeth worse and worse: the going away, or rather driving away of godly Devotion, and the Bringing in of Carnal Liberty, making small Conscience, or rather none at all, of most Things, is the only Cause thereof: and compare the said Times with our Time, and it will be so plain, that it cannot be denied of any indifferent Person and then it must needs be true, that the Builders and Maintayners of them were far wiser in building of them, than we in destroying them and the Governours of the Common Weale then far better: For the good governours of Common Weales ever respecteth more the Profit of the Commons than their own Profit; and do consider that the Commons do elect them and

¹ The legendary first Christian King of England, whose story was largely invented by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Sherbrook probably derived it from Foxe, i. 305 *seqq.*

² Derived from the practice of presenting a silver bell to the winner of a horse-race. Cf. the first recorded example at York, 1530, in *York Civic Records*, iii (*Y.A.S. Rec. Ser. cvi*), 131-2. But the phrase also became confused with the idea of the bell-wether, which 'took first place' in a different sense.

make them Governours, not to destroy but to maintain them; not to hurt, but to help them, not to poll and pill, but to seek to enrich them.

And further to know whether the Founders and Maintayners of such Houses did mean well in the founding, building and maintaining thereof, it is necessary their Lives and ther Deaths and Ends be well considered: For if they [6 (3)] were Godly and devout people toward God and of Godly Minds: then their Acts and Doings in the Building of them must be godly and good; For as a man cannot gather of an evil Tree good Fruit; no more can there be had of a good Tree evill Fruit:¹ For of a good Faith in God cometh a good Mind; whereof cometh good works: For if the Eye be good, pure and lightsome, all the Body is pure and full of Light.²

Now if we will know whether the Lives of such Men and Women were godly; seeing it is so many years ago since they lived, we have no other way to come thereby, but to learn the same of such persons that lived in their Time, and have taken the Pain to set down in writing their Acts, Deeds, Lives and Deaths as a Monument of their well-doing.

For as the Acts of evill Persons, and the Mischeifs that cometh thereby to themselves and others are chronicled, to the end to give others warning not to do the Like, for fear of the like Mischeifs that may ensue thereof: even so are the Lives and well-doings of good People: whereby great Commodities do come to themselves and to others likewise, put in writing and left to their Posterity, to provoke them by their good Example to do the Like.

Therefore if we do not beleive the Chronicles and Writings speaking of such ancient Acts, good or bad, we can learn no more than we come by, by our own Experience: more often happening to our Hurt than to our good; therefore *Fœlix est quem faciunt aliena Pericula cautum*.

Methinks I hear one say, that if such persons as builded Monasteries, Colleges and Hospitals, for sick, lame, fatherless Children, strangers, old people, maimed Soldiers and such like, were godly Persons; then such Acts must be godly. But I would gladly hear how they will prove them godly persons. Forsooth I prove them so to be by my ancient Evidence, that is, ancient Writers and Chronicles in all Ages since Christ's time that have made mention of them. To the which evidence, because they be no more in my Custody than in others, I send thee to view and read them: And although I cannot name to thee every Peice thereof, yet I will

¹ Matt. vii. 17-18, perhaps paraphrased from the Vulgate.

² Matt. vi. 22; Luke xi. 34. Again the phraseology does not correspond with that of any recognised translation. The Rheims version of 1582 uses the word 'lightsome'.

tell thee part of them: as Polychronicon,¹ Fabian,² Bede,³ St. Gregory, St. Jerome.⁴ Yea, Fox,⁵ an enemy to Monasteries among others,⁶ reporting the Life of King Alured that builded in the Saxon's Time three Monasteries, and King Edgar 40 more:⁷ For the Property of Fox is, when he findeth any writing against the abuse of such Houses, to apply it to the Religion itself; descanting thereupon by his own ignorant Censure and Gloss, more wickedly, than godly: In which Histories the good Minds of the Founders in building and endowing them with great Revenues, will be appear [*sic*] unto [6v (4)] thee; if the Causes why they builded them be laid open, as they be expressed in my said ancient evidence: for I find them there set down and well and learnedly penned, not without good study and great Reason, to be the same Cause that the Godly People in the Primitive Church respected, when they sold all that they had, and brought it to the Apostles to be distributed among needy Persons:⁸ whereof some had forsaken all that they had, as the Apostles had done before them, willingly for Christ's sake; and othersome were spoyled of all they had by the Pagan Emperours and Kings, because they confessed Christ, and themselves to be Christians: for if no Provision should have been made for such Persons, how should they have lived?

Was not Christ and his apostles maintained by such as favoured and loved him? Very well. And yet did not his Favourers as he and his Apostles did in all Points? For although Mary Magdalen did please Christ well with her Doings; yet Martha her carefull Sister in preparing Christ's Dinner did not offend him: for although he rebuked her Carefulness, yet he allowed her Diligence and Labour, in that he was content to take Part thereof.

Therefore there is a peice of Evidence laid up among the Decrees of Pope Urban,⁹ (or rather Father Urban, if thou cannot

¹ Higden's *Polychronicon*, translated by Trevisa, was printed by Caxton in 1482; there were further editions in 1495 and 1527.

² Fabyan's *Chronicle*, with appropriate continuations, was printed in 1516, 1533, 1542, and 1559.

³ Editions of Bede's *Ecclesiastica Historia* appeared in 1475, 1500, 1550, 1566, 1587, 1601. In addition Stapleton's translation into English was published at Antwerp in 1565.

⁴ E.g. in *Pat. Lat.*, xxiii, c. 40.

⁵ Editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* appeared in 1563, 1570, 1576, 1583, 1596, and 1610.

⁶ Perhaps Sherbrook had especially in mind the bitter attack on monasticism in Foxe, v. 373 *seqq.*

⁷ Cf. Foxe, ii. 24 (Alured=Alfred); ii. 52-3. ⁸ Acts, iv. 34-5.

⁹ The succeeding passage shows that Sherbrook is referring to Pope Urban I (220-30 A.D.). His account of this alleged decree is based upon the dubious authority of the *Polychronicon*, which relates (*Rolls Ser.*, v. 66-9) how Pope Urban 'ordeyned that the offrynges of Cristene men schulde non othir wyse be y-spend but in use of holy chirche and in help of nedy Cristen men In his tyme the chirche of Rome bygan first to have londes and rentes, and with the profit therof he fonde notaries and clerkes to write the lyvinge and dedes of holy seyntes; [whereas, before this time] holy chirche lyvede as the apostles, and [received] onliche money to the use of needy Cristen men'.

away with the Name of Pope, although Papa is put for Papas, which is Pope in English, which is as much to say, as Father: whereupon the Flemings in Flanders, calleth their Priests Papes) which Evidence proveth this Matter in Question very well; if you will not deny that Peice, or say it is forged as some do. The Sum of which Peice of Evidence is thus briefly set down. In the Beginning of the Church of Christ all faithfull People sold all they had, and brought the Money they sold it for to the Apostles, untill such time as the Bishops and Priests did see and perceive by long Experience, that it was better to give their Inheritances, Possessions and Feilds (which they used to sell) to the Bishops and Governors of Congregations, to the end the faithfull needy Persons, as well then present, as they that might fortune to succeed and come after, might be maintained of the Revenues thereof: so that there should not be at any time, any Person among the Faithfull that should lack needfull Things, towards the Maintenance of his or her Life.

And these Possessions, thus given by faithfull Christians, to the use of the Church and Congregation of the Christians, was called the oblations and offerings of the faithfull People, because they offered to the Lord, that is, for Christ's sake: and therefore they ought not to be converted or put to any other [7 (5)] Use, than to the Use of the Bishops and Priests, and needfull Brethren and Sisters of the faithfull Congregation, because they were the vows of the faithfull, and the Price of their Sins, and the Patrimony of the poor People given to the Lord to be bestowed accordingly.

Now if within the Compass of this Peice of Evidence, being made in the year of our Lord God 222, which is above 1345 years ago,¹ (since the which time all the Monasteries, Colleges, Churches, Chantrys, Chapels and Hospitals in England, have been founded and builded by the Kings and Queens of England, and Bishops and divers others of the Nobility and other inferiour Persons, to the Honour of God and relieving of the poor) the Building and endowing whereof may be comprehended; then no doubt the Founders were of good and perfect Minds in building thereof: and so the Building of them was good and the Fruits of good Trees.

And seeing the Cause of every Act cannot be better known than by the effect thereof; therefore it is necessary to shew the Effect and Profit that came of those Acts; which was to have the Works of Charity done not at one time, and so to cease: but to be done from time to time so long as faithfull Christians remained within the Realm. Which was done so long as they stood, For the said Covents and Fellowships in the said Monasteries, Colleges, Churches, Chantries, Chapels and Hospitals practised the seven works of Mercy, both ghostly and bodily, dayly: besides continual

¹ This gives the date 1567, but only for this earlier portion of the treatise. Cf. *supra*, p. 31.

Prayer both Night and Day: for there was no time of the Night that within one House or other God's Service was not devoutly and solemnly said, sung or plaid upon the organs; as the Like is done in Monasteries beyond the Seas at this Day.

For they taught and preached Faith and good Works, and practised the same both in word and Deed; not only within the Monasteries and Howses, but also all abroad without.

They made such Provision daily for the People as stood in Need thereof,¹ as sick, sore, lame or otherwise impotent, that none or very few lack[ed] Relief in one Place or other: yea many of them, whose Revenues were sufficient thereunto, made Hospitals and Lodgings within their own Howses, wherein they kept a Number of the said impotent Persons, with all Necessaries for them, with Persons to attend upon them: besides the great alms they gave daily at their gates to every one that came for it: yea no wayfaring Person could depart without a Night's Lodging, Meat, Drink and Money; without being demanded from whence he or she came, and whither he would go.

Thus they fed the Hungry, and gave Drink to the thirsty, and cloathed them [7 v (6)] that stood in Need of Clothing; and comforted the Sick, Sore and Lame; and helped Strangers to Lodging within their Gates; nor ever suffered the dead Body of a Christian, which was the Temple of God, whilst he lived, to lie unburied: such Reverence bare they to the dead Bodies that was the Covering of the Soul, a Member of Christ, the Head of the Faithfull Congregation, for Christ's Cause: Yea they would not lett² to give great Sums of Money to redeem any faithfull Person forth of Prison or Captivity; and to feed the Prisoners in Prison, although they were imprisoned for their own evil Livings and Offence, and not for Christ's Cause or pure Religion towards God.

And as for the Offences committed within their own House, they suffered not the Offender to escape unpunished, although it were but a small Offence, committed contrary to the Rules of their House: which Rules were made very strait to keep them in good Order, both toward God and their Neighbour; and used in most monasteries, (as it appeareth by the godly Rules of the Blessed Father and Abbat St. Benedict, whose Life St. Gregory hath set down at large, in his second Book of Dialogues; the which I have translated forth of Latin into English, for the better instructing of my Country People,³ that loveth to hear the godly Lives and Doctrine of Holy Men and women, these declared at full and very learnedly. For every week, yea oftener if need required, they kept a Chapter, viz: a meeting together in a certain close and secret House, appointed only for that purpose, called the Chapter House; to the end that

¹ On the succeeding passage, see p. 33 *supra*.

² Forbear, omit.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 28.

they might sift forth the offenders and punish the same; and also to the end to teach and read the Holy Scriptures, with the Exposition of Godly Fathers among themselves.

They lacked not their private Prisons, and other Means for the punishment of the said Offenders, according to the Heynousness thereof; and they were ever ready, yea every one of them, to instruct and inform the Ignorant both by way of Auricular Confession or otherwise, that came to them, for good Counsell: and they taught the unlearned that was put to them to be taught: yea the Poor as well as the Rich; without demanding any thing for their labour, other than that the rich Parents was willing to give to them of mere Devotion.¹

There was no Person that came to them heavy or sad for any Cause that went away comfortless; They never revenged them of any Injury; [8 (7)] But was content to forgive it freely upon Submission: And if the Price of Corn had begun to start up in the Markets, they made thereunto with wayne Load of Corn, and sold it under the Markett to poor People, to the End to bring down the Price thereof. If the Highways, Bridges or Causeys, were tedious to the Passengers that sought their Living by their Travel; their great Help lacked not toward the repairing and amending thereof: yea oftentimes they amended them on their own proper Charges.

If any poor Householder had lacked Seed to sow his Land, or Bread corn, or Malt before Harvest, and come to a Monastery either of Men or Women, he should not have gone away without Help; for he should have had it untill Harvest, that he might easily have paid it again. Yea if he had made his Moan for an Ox, Horse or Cow, he might have had it upon his Credit: And such was the good Conscience of the Borrowers in those Dayes, that the Thing borrowed needed not to have been asked at the Day of Payment.

They never raised any Rent, or took any Income or Garsomes² of their tenants; nor ever took in or improved any Commons;³ although the most Part and the greatest wast grounds belonged to their Possessions.

If any poor People had made their Mone at their day of Mariage to any Abbey, they should have had Money given to them to their great Help. And thus all sort of People were helped and succoured by Abbeys: Yea happy was that Person that was Tenant to an Abbey; for it was a rare thing to hear that any Tenant was removed by taking his Farm over his head; nor he was not afraid of any Reentry for not Payment of his Rent, if Necessity drove him thereunto.

¹ A distinct exaggeration of the monastic rôle in public education.

² I.e. any fines or gressoms.

³ Untrue; cf. *supra*, p. 32.

And thus they fulfilled the works of Charity in all the Country round about them, to the good example of all Lay Persons, that now have taken forth other Lessons, that is, *Nunc Tempus alios postulat Mores*.¹

Now it followeth to declare their private Life and Exercise that every one used with the House. First as touching their Profession, which was to pray devoutly, both privately and in Common Prayer, or Service dayly used in their Church or Oratory: For every House had a Church within itself, wherein rested their greatest Exercise both Day and Night. For their usage was from two of the clock after Midnight² to say Service, untill four of the Clock; and then to go to their work, if they were not Priests, [8 v (8)] to work according to their knowledge in their Arts: for many of them were Artificers: and they that could write, did write, and lymne Books, and bind them for the Abbey, or other that should need thereof: for in those days the Print was not found out:³ and those that would read, might read the Scripture and such Godly Books: And so they continued in one Godly Exercise or other untill 9 of the Clock before Noon, at which time they repaired to their Service in the Church, again saying Mass and such Prayers untill eleven of the Clock: and then after the Service done they went to Dinner: at which time after Grace being said, one of the Covent read a Chapter of the Holy Scripture in an audible and distinct Voice, to the end that all the Residue there being might meditate thereof all Dinner Time: and after Dinner, Grace being said, with diverse godly Prayers, they went to the Church and said certain private Prayers, and then went every one to such work as he was skilfull in, some to the Dressing of the Garden or Orchard, as to plant, and set and so forth; as the Time required, untill 3 of the Clock, and then they went to their Service in the Church again untill towards 5 of the Clock; the which being ended they went to their supper, with as great Reverence as they did to their Dinner; if the Day was not to be fasted: (For divers Days in every week they fasted, and in Advent and Lent they fasted every Day.) And after Supper they were not idle, no more than they were before: but then they went to one good work or other, as was most for the Profit of the whole House, untill they went to their Rest: at which time every one laid by himself in a little Cell, having little more Room than would serve for a Bed, and a Shelf for his Books: nether their Bed nor their

¹ Perhaps adapted from Dionysius Cato, *Disticha de Moribus*, i. 7: 'temporibus mores sapiens sine crimine mutat', but the idea is conveyed in numerous Latin tags.

² In the rule of St. Benedict matins was prescribed for the eighth hour of the night, i.e. 2 a.m.

³ A reminder that the writer was not solely concerned with the last generations of monks in England. But G. G. Coulton has shown (*Art and the Reformation*, ch. iii, iv) that the prowess of medieval monks as artists is largely a fable built up on a small number of untypical examples.

Apparel was any whit costly: And all broken Meat that they left at any Meal, was given to the Poor, and much more besides.

Therefore the least Portion of their Revenues was bestowed on them selves: for their Revenues being great, as it was in many Monasteries, there must needs be much spent in good Hospitality and in alms upon the Poor.¹

Their Hospitality was so great, that if either the King, Bishops or any other noble Personage came to them, they were able to receive the one and other according to his Calling; yea with all his Retinue. And when they received the King, they received him with great Reverence and solemnity at the Abbey Gates, and carried him up to the High Altar, singing a Response of the Holy Trinity and [9 (9)] ringing of their Bells. And when the King had with them made his Prayers before the High Altar, then he was carried from thence to the Abbot's Lodging, with as great Reverence as doth pertain to a King.²

And in like Order for the most Part they received the Archbishop and their Founder, at his first coming to the Abbey: and after the Founder had been once there, they ever received him afterwards as other honourable Personages with Prayer: but not with so great solemnity, for they were seldom without gentlemen Estrangers or others, which ever sat at the abbat's Table: for he for the most part kept a Table by himself only; for the receiving of Estrangers: and he had all Houses of Office by himself; and was served in such Order, that any young Gentlemen might well have learned in his service as good service, as in any Bishop his service at this day; And the Covent, for the most part, took their Repast altogether by themselves, in the Halle, called the Covent Hall; and in the Frater in the Time of Lent with their Abbat: In the which Frater was painted all the Passion of Christ: and every night in the year two of the youngest of the Covent, called Novices, watched at the least in the Cloyster, either writing or reading, or doing some other needfull works, profitable for the whole Covent, to the End to call up the Covent, when the Hour and Time of Service came; and kept all the Night a Lamp burning in the Church: for when solemn Feasts came, their Service was long, and done with many

¹ In fact, most monasteries were in debt during their last stages and had no large surpluses for charity outside the disbursements to which they were legally bound by the wills of benefactors. Even so, many maintained the traditional hospitality to the last. This was not the 'patrimony of the poor', but extended to men of all classes. The Act 3 Edward I cap. 1 seeks to protect monasteries against ruinous visits by great men and their households; nevertheless, as the *Chron. Butley Priory* shows, such visits continued up to the dissolution.

² An excellent example of such a reception occurs in the *Chron. Butley Priory*, pp. 33-4, which describes that accorded by Butley to Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII.

godly Ceremonies used therein: and therefore they rose the sooner in those Nights than in any other.

When any of the Covent died he was solemnly watched and buried with great service and Ceremonies pertaining to the same: as Mass and Dirige; and brought forth with all the Covent, and buried in the same Apparel he died, his Cowl done over his Face: whereby it may appear they took small Rest in their Beds; seldom putting off their Apparel.

And this was their daily Exercise all their Life time.

Peradventure some Person will say, Thou hast said the best of them; but thou tellest not what vice; as whoredom, superstition and Idolatry was used among them in all Monasteries and Abbeys. No truly; For if there were such Vices among them; (which I do as little allow, as any Protestant,¹ be he never so zealous) it was not to be wondred at: seeing always among good Corn are some Weeds not a few: Yea very filthy [9 v (10)] and stinking, both in the sight and smell of the good Husbandman, that yet for all that, doth not destroy the Corn for the Weeds; but rather suffereth them to grow until Harvest, that he may save the Corn in his Barn, and burn the Weeds at his Pleasure.² A good Physician or Surgeon doth not so cure one or two corrupt Members of the whole Body that therewithall he killeth the whole Body. For such a Physician may rather be accounted a Mankiller than a saver, a Destroyer than a Helper, a Devil rather than a Saint. And what need I to declare any such Thing; for the Protestants have spoken enough thereof; yea more than enough: as they do in all things they go about, when they are disposed and sett to tell Untruths: for they can find nothing but vice among them in the Monasteries; therefore it is needfull that some Person speak of their Virtues, omitted by the Protestants: although their Virtues, as is before expressed, did far excell their Vice. But who is so blind as he that hath eyes to see and will not see? and so deaf as he that hath ears to hear and will not hear? least³ they should be saved. For no doubt if the Protestants could have found any virtue or Commodity by the standing of them, were it never so small they would not have omitted it;⁴ no more than they did all the Vice and Discommodity they did find by the Maintenance of the Abbeys: seeing they profess so great Truth and Sincerity in all their Writings and Doings.

Yea although they found no Virtue among them; yet they found something more than Vice among them: for they found great wealth among them, as costly and stately Houses richly furnished with costly moveable goods; as Chalice, Crosses, Crewets, Censers,

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 30.

³ lest.

² Matt. xiii. 29-30.

⁴ Said, of course, ironically.

Paxes¹ of Silver double gilt, and all other Things that belonged to God's Service in the Church, of no small Price; with no less costly Copes, vestments and all other like Ornaments; with no small Quantity of Plate of all Sorts, used in the Hall for the reteyning of Strangers both honourable and worshipfull: and besides all other Furniture of the best, belonging to such an House, whereof there lacked none: with great Stock and Store in their Sites and Granges;² so that it was thought by the Officers of the Houses, that the Moveables of Every Abbey one with another was better to the King than a 1000 pound and there was then standing in England 10000 Monasteries.³ The Timber, Iron, Lead, Glass and Stone of every House one accounted with another was better than 2000 markes. But whether all came to the King's Use, I will not say: for it is reported to the contrary [10 (11)] as it will appear by the Sequel of the Matter.⁴ And the Revenues that came yearly to the said Monasteries, by reason of their Temporal Possessions, amounted to the yearly sum of 4970000^{li} which likewise came to the King's Hands: for so much they were esteemed to be worth in Henry 4 time, by a Bill put into the Parliament by the Protestants, then called Lollards, persuading the King and his Commons to take all the said temporal Possessions from the Abbeys, and to bestow them to other Uses, particularly in the said Bill mentioned, and expressed; far better than they were bestowed, at the Suppression of them or any time since.

Besides the Parsonages impropriated, which came to no less a Number than 30000; seeing there was in England at the Conquest 40005 Parish Churches; and far more at the Suppression of the Abbeys: because many waste Places that were then, are become Towns, that was not so at the Conquest: every one of the which Parsonages could not be so little as xx^{li} yearly, one with another: seeing they were for the most part of the best Parsonages, both in Living and Value within the Realm; so that the worst of them for the most part is worth now 100^{li} a year.⁵ And beside all this the King had by the Dissolution of the said Monasteries, pensions that

¹ Pax, a tablet of latten or wood, with a projecting handle behind and bearing a representation of the Crucifixion, etc.; this was kissed by the priest and congregation at mass. Paxes often figure in the Edwardian inventories of church goods and were confiscated in 1553.

² The outlying farms of the monasteries. Granges formed an especially important part of the economy of the great northern Cistercian houses. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (v. 241, 253) mentions 21 belonging to Fountains and five to Jervaulx.

³ On the fantastic character of these and the subsequent statistics cf. *supra*, p. 35.

⁴ On embezzlement see *infra*, p. 123.

⁵ An astonishingly high estimate, as being supposedly based on contemporary observation. Yet while this is unacceptable, so are the low figures of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, as applied to the real incomes of Elizabethan incumbents.

were granted forth of other Parsonages that were not appropriated to the said Abbeyes, to be yearly paid, as forth of some parsonages xls and some x^{li} and some more or less according to the value of the Parsonages, which is thought to come to the yearly sum of 1000^{li}. By reason of the which yearly Revenues, which¹ stock and Store well husbanded upon the Sites of Granges, as is aforesaid, the most abbeyes kept daily a Howsehold Family (besides the Abbat or Abbess and their Covent, which commonly were xx Persons) of 100 Persons in every House, one House with another;² and not so few, as I have heard it credibly reported, by such as was of the Howsehold.

Therefore it must needs follow, that the Releif was great, that came from such Houses daily: for the Like cometh not from an Earl's House at this Day, that then came from some one of those Abbeyes.

Thus somewhat hath been said touching the Cause of the 1st founding and building of the Religious Houses, Colleges, Hospitals, Churches and such Like: and of the Usage and Qualities of the Persons that occupied and were Owners of the same, by the Laws of this Realm, and of the great Wealth of the said Houses, and the Commodity that came to the Realm [10v (12)] by the Building and Maintaining of them. Somewhat I say, because the Owners of the said Houses, were the greatest part of the Clergy in those days;³ and so the most part of the Wealth, both in Goods and Possessions, and Revenues temporal, were among the said Religious Persons. For all the temporal Possessions being among the whole Clergy came to the Number of 2815 Knights Fees;⁴ and every Knights Fee containeth 640 acres of ground at the Time of the Conquest; which must needs be far more at the suppression of the said Houses: because the antient Religious Houses had purchased more land since; and diverse other Houses hath been builded since, that hath been greatly endowed with Temporal Possessions: Besides the Parish Churches and Bishopricks that have since been likewise endowed with Temporal Possessions: For there are in all England

¹ Perhaps for 'with'.

² Less fantastic than might at first appear. Savine calculates that 41 male houses with 487 monks and canons had no less than 1685 lay servants. Butley Priory had only twelve canons, but a total community of 84 persons, including the 34 workers on the home farm and gardens (*Chron. Butley Priory*, app. I).

³ An exaggeration, at all events as applied to the period immediately preceding the dissolution, when the number of religious persons did not very greatly exceed 8,000, but when there were about 9284 parishes and (again taking Camden's figure) about 2374 chantries and free chapels. The number of the religious was admittedly by then much depleted, yet at all periods of the middle ages that of *unbeneficed* secular clergy was large.

⁴ On this figure cf. *supra*, p. 35.

but 6235 Knights Fees¹ by the Computation of William the Conqueror, that caused all the ground within the Realme to be measured and so set down; after the Order and Usage in Normandy: For all the Land there is registered at this Day, and always hath been; and is set down, of whom it is holden; whether it be holden of the Duke immediate or mediate: for if it be holden mediate, then it is declared of whom it is so holden mediate, and whose Occupation it is in.

The Clergy being thus endowed with more than the 3^d part of all the Ground within the Realm, had also the 10th part of all the Profit coming of the other ground in the Temporal Peoples occupation.² Besides diverse other offerings: as coarse Presents,³ Garden Pence,⁴ Smoke Pence⁵ Burialls, Churchings, Weddings and Oblations to Images, and such like: whereby the Clergy became both stout and proud and replenished with other vice, as it appeareth by the Chronicles and Histories of England; and specially in the 6th Book of the Policronicon in the 24 Chapter; and in the 7th Book and 6 Chapter, to the great offence of Almighty God, the Cause of all their Ruin:⁶ For God even in their most Wealth and Pride suffered one of themselves to rise forth of the Dust to plague them, and as it was to be a Forerunner to prepare a way of King Henry 8 to the end that he might end the thing that was begun: I mean by Cardinal Wolsey, the Butcher's Son of Ipswich; which most pompously did ride through London, being accompanied with 2 Earls, xxxvi Knights, 100 Gentlemen, 8 Bishops, 10 abbats, 30 chaplains, all in velvet and Sattin, and 700 yeomen in red Coats with Cardinals Hats embroidered waiting upon him: For his Delight was altogether in Vain-glory, and [11 (13)] Ambition: wherein he ascended from one Degree to another, higher and higher, untill he came to be Cardinal Legat here in England from the Pope's side:⁷ for such Popes, such Legates.

And he was not in so great Favour with the Pope, but he was in greater with King Henry 8 insomuch that there was no great

¹ A mistake for the 60,015 of the *Polychronicon* (bk. i, ch. 49) in itself a fanciful figure based on Ordericus Vitalis. Cf. Stubbs, *Constitutional Hist.*, i. 468n.

² Common estimates, which Sherbrook may have derived from Simon Fish (*op. cit.*, p. 2): 'they have gotten ynto theyre hondes more than the therd part of all youre Realme . . . Besides this, they have the tenth part [i.e. by tithes] of all the corne, medow, pasture, grasse, wolfe, coltes, calves, lambes, pigges, geese and chickens. Over and bisides, the tenth part of every servauntes wages', etc.

³ Mortuary dues to the clergy from the chattels of a householder at his burial.

⁴ Tithes on garden-produce. *N.E.D.*, s.v. garden 6, gives seventeenth century examples of the expression.

⁵ A hearth-tax offered at Whitsuntide by the householders of a diocese to the cathedral church. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. smoke-farthing.

⁶ On these curious examples, cf. *supra*, p. 34.

⁷ Literal translation of *legatus a latere*: on the implications of the office cf. A. F. Pollard, *Wolsey*, pp. 168 *seqq.*

Embassage to any Prince from the King, but he did it. So that the said Butcher's Son at length cared not for the Emperor, but thought to revenge himself of the Emperor because he would not help him to the Popedome at his suit and Labour, in whose Behalf the King Henry 8 wrote. For such a Devil is Ambition, that it never resteth, untill it have brought the Party into the highest Place, and thrown him down headlong by the way to the lowest.¹

And whilst he was aspiring to the Popedome for Vain Glory's sake, he obtained a Bull from the Pope to pluck down two² small Abbeys (a great Light to the Overthrow of all the Residue) and with them to build, erect and set up two Colleges, one at Ipswich, where he was born, and another at Oxford: which were both begun very sumptuously; Yea so sumptuously taking their Ground, not for God's sake but for Human Praise, that they were like they should never come to good Perfection: whereof these verses were made:

Haec Domus, antiquis quondam constructa Ruinis,
Aut ruit, aut demum Demon habebit eam.³

At the pulling down of which Abbeys, Cromwell, a Shermans Son,⁴ by occupation then was Servant to the said Cardinall, and put in Trust with the spoil of the said 2 Abbeys in his Masters Behalf, wherein he spied such Wealth and was so misled in the spoyling thereof, that he thought every Day a thousand years untill he were in the Bowells of all the Residue.

Now the said Cardinal gaping for the Popedome, and missing it, as he thought by the Emperors means, whose Cousin⁵ being the Kings Daughter of Spain, was married 1st to Prince Arthur, King Henry 8 eldest Brother, which died in the Life of his Father Henry 7, and therefore it was thought good by the King of Spain and King of England Henry 7 to marry the same Woman again to the younger Brother, then Prince Henry, for diverse Considerations touching the Wealth of England: the which mariage being brought to pass by Dispensation from Rome (for things touching Mariage set down by human Law, man may dispence therewith: for what Man bindeth, he may loose again by the like Authority he bindeth,⁶ as it doth appear in this Matter and many other like) continued from that

¹ Foxe, iv. 587 *seqq.* provided Sherbrook with ample material on Wolsey's pride and pomp.

² Actually 29 small houses were dissolved by Wolsey in 1524-8 for this purpose; list in J. Gairdner, *English Church in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 419.

³ I have not yet located the source of these lines.

⁴ Walter Cromwell was in fact not a mere cloth-worker, but carried on miscellaneous business as a brewer, smith and fuller. Though of somewhat riotous character, he was Constable of Putney and a man of some property (R. B. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, i, pp. 1-4).

⁵ Katherine was the aunt of Emperor Charles V.

⁶ Sherbrook here begs the chief legal problem of the divorce-suit.

time until after the Death [11v (14)] of Henry 7 and untill the 20 year of King Henry 8 when as the said Cardinal was in his Ruffe,¹ and thought he would be even with the Emperor for the Cause aforesaid: And therefore sought by what Means he might displeasure his Cousin here in England, married to the King called then Queen Catherine; by whom the King had a Daughter, living, called Mary; afterwards Queen of England, as shall be declared hereafter; seeing the King's mind how it was always inclined, which loved better a fair woman, than an Holy Fryer; and that he did well know the old Proverb, how Change of Pasture maketh fat Calves; He the said Cardinal caused the King's Ghostly Father, then Bishop of Lincoln, to lett him understand, that it was not lawfull for him to have his Brother's wife;² because the Cardinal would not do it himself; to the Intent he might the better show his mind therin to the King when the King opened the Matter to him, as to one that thing not privy: for he knew the King would not keep it close from him: and besides that it should not appear that it was first broached by him; although he was the principal Brewer thereof; the which thing being put into the King's mind, it was even according as the King would have it: for then there was even at the same time one of Queen Catherine's maids of Honour that he fancied full well; yea better than the Queen herself: as the Sequel of the Matter proved it after. The King, god wot, being so tossed in his Conscience, that he could take no Rest until he was well certified thereof (so sore sat God Cupid therein) and therefore he did all that he could to be divorced from Queen Catherine, his old stale wife. Whereupon came a Legate from Rome, called Cardinal Campejus, and had joyned with him in Commission the said Cardinal Wolsey, for the Tryal of the said Mariage, about the which there were no small Doubts cast: For one was that the Issue betwixt them, should be a Bastard, and so no small Hindrance to the Inheritance of the Crown; with diverse other like matters of the same Stamp.

By Force of the which Commission and Bull from Rome, both the said Cardinals sat upon the Matter; the King hastening it and furthering it with his Might (so greatly was he inspired by the Holy Ghost that proceeded from the God Cupid³ touching the fair young Lady Anne Bulleyn) which being brought up beyond the seas where

¹ Elation, pride, vainglory; cf. *N.E.D.*, Ruff sb 6, 2.

² Bishop Longland of Lincoln was blamed by the Lincolnshire rebels of 1536, by Harpsfield and others, for raising doubts in the King's mind concerning the validity of his marriage. Tyndale in his *Practice of Prelates* and Polydore Vergil (*Anglica Historia*, Camden Ser., lxxiv. 324) accused Wolsey and Longland of suggesting the divorce. On Longland's actual part, see G. E. Wharhirst in *Lincs. Architectural and Archaeological Society's Reports*, vol. i, pt. ii (1937), pp. 155 seqq. and R. S. Sylvester in *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*, *E.E.T.S.*, ccxliii. 228.

³ Compare the similarly tasteless *Venus Mass* of Lydgate, addressed to Cupid, 'the mighty God of Love'.

she had tasted a little of the Germans new Religion,¹ or rather smelled well, not of Luther's Fryer's Coat, but rather of his Wedding Garment he put on when he married the nun. The which so soon as the hypocritical Cardinal Wolsey espied, it was no need to bid him bestir his stumps lest all should go to the Devil [12 (15)] as it did: For he doubted if she were married to the King, that she would make him a Lutheran also: Although the King had not long before² written a Book earnestly against Luther and his Doctrine: for the which Cause, the Pope made him the Defendor of the Faith: which is used ever since in the stiles of the Kings and Queens of England.

Therefore the Cardinal wrote to Rome to stay the Divorce, which he himself had hastened before: whereof so soon as the King had knowledge by his Ambassador lying at Rome, he took it not a little grievously (as he might well) against the Cardinal, being his own Subject, and one whom from time to time he had preferred from one Honour to another; so that he was the second Person in England: yea almost did with the King: in such Favour he was with the King, and had no small Living by his Gift: as the Archbishoprick of York and the Bishoprick of Winchester; beside the Chancellorship, and divers other great Rowmes;³ in the which Rowmes, being both Spiritual and Temporal he plagued all the Clergy of England not a little to his great gain.

But they were more plagued afterward, as it shall appear by the sequel of the Matter: for he but swunged⁴ them: but the King after burned up all: for he took a Displeasure with the Cardinal, and sought by what means he could find a Hole in his Coat: where he found not one Hole, but many: yea it all torn, with the Help of his Council and Nobility not favouring the Cardinal, for his stout Bearing of himself, both above and against diverse of the Nobility: amongst whom he overthrew the Duke of Buckingham⁵ (for Stoutness without Wisdom is evil) that was glad to hear of his Fall: and therefore cast on Flax when that they saw the Fire Kindled.

Therefore they found how by Colour of his Legateship from Rome he had meddled in Matters against the Crown and the Common Law of this Realm, whereby he was runned within the Case of

¹ The common Tudor attitude toward a foreign upbringing. Anne Boleyn's later *penchant* toward Lutheranism cannot be ascribed with much probability to her nine years at the French court.

² In 1521, with his *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*.

³ Rooms, a common word for offices, appointments, functions. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. room, 12, 13.

⁴ A form of singe, found e.g. in Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, I, canto xi, st. 26.

⁵ Concerning the hostility between Buckingham and Wolsey, there can be no doubt. Though Wolsey had a part in the Duke's overthrow, the latter cannot simply be ascribed to him. This aristocratic tradition, as opposed to the proletarians Wolsey and Cromwell, flourished persistently in the popular view of recent history.

Premunire, wherein he was cast; and so forfeited all his Goods to the King, which was innumerable. And so to be short, he went not so fast upward, but he came thrice as fast downward. A worthy Reward for such a dissembling, covetous, ambitious, vain-glorious and Hypocritical Person: that neither feared God nor Man. Inso-much he being attatched in Yorkshire to be brought up to London to answer to his Facts,¹ which he knew full well he could not answer, but to his utter Undoing; he thought it better to dis-[12v (16)]-patch himself by the way, and so died at Leicester out of the King's Favour, and as it was reported by poisoning of himself.²

So thou seest, good Christian Reader, that the Scripture is true that sayeth, He that diggeth a Pit for others falleth himself therein.³

Now the Cardinal is dead, therefore let us return to the Sherman's Son, Cromwell his Servant; a fit Instrument left behind to finish that he had begun, and to prosecute the Overthrow of Religious Houses; who being preferred into the King's Service, by such as were about the King, declaring to the King what a fine and fit Fellow he was for the King's Purpose touching the said Divorce; which could not be brought to pass before the Pope's Authority was quite abolished out of England; which daily had no small sums of Money out of the Realm, the which might as well be bestowed of⁴ the King as of the Pope, a false Usurper in such Matters: which Thing sounded very well in the King's Ear, being rather given to serve the Flesh than the Spirit: Therefore the King willed the said Thomas Cromwell to come to him; with whom he talked and found him no less fit for his Purpose than it was informed him. For he told the King that the best way to abolish the Pope was, first to cast all the Clergy in England to a Premunire for taking part with the Cardinal in such Matters as were against the Crown and the Temporal Law:⁵ the which was quickly brought to pass; and so the whole Clergy fain to compound with the King for all their goods, and gave him no small Sums of money, as 100 000 pounds. Besides that they granted to the King all his Request touching the

¹ Deeds; most commonly used at this period in the sense of evil deeds, crimes. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. fact.

² The common Tudor fable concerning various notabilities; cf. *infra*, p. 140, n. 1. Wolsey, who took violent purgatives and died of a bowel-ailment, obviously invited this rumour, but Sherbrook certainly went beyond what he found in Hall and Foxe. Cf. R. S. Sylvester in *E.E.T.S.*, ccxliii. 241, 256.

³ Eccl. x. 8.

⁴ On; a common usage several times repeated *infra*.

⁵ The notion that the whole clergy incurred *Præmunire* penalties in 1530 for complicity with Wolsey's usurped jurisdiction has recently been shown as a misconception originated by Hall (J. Scarisbrick in *Cambridge Historical Journal*, xii). At this moment Cromwell was preparing to enter the King's Council, but no evidence supports the idea that he suggested the move to the King.

Pope's Abolishment:¹ The which being brought to pass, the King was made Supream Head both of the Spirituality and Temporality within England by Act of Parliament.²

To speak to the Contrary it was made Treason, by the which Law diverse Good and Godly Persons, Religious and others, were hanged, drawn and quartered.³ But the most Part of the Clergy said as the King said: such was their Faith!

And then was to the Bishop of Canterbury, called Cranmer, given the like power that the Pope had within this realm, touching Spiritual Matters; as consecrating of Bishops, Dispensations and such other Matters:⁴ which was handpatt⁵ for the King: For Cranmer was a Man even after the King's own Heart. What Bishop, abbat or other Spiritual Person dare say Nay, if the King say yea, being both King and Pope himself: whereas before the Pope was both King and Pope in England, as Cromwell declared to the King, shewing how the Clergy had sworn to the Pope before they were sworn to the King: letting him see the Form of Oath that the Clergy made to the Pope.⁶

And because Cromwell could so well handle the Matter, he was made the cheif in the Congregation House among the Clergy; that was the King's Viceregent. For as the Pope had in every general Council, his Deputy; being Head of the Council: [13 (17)] So had now the King, being Pope, his Deputy in the Congregation House:⁷ for as the General Councils for the most Part doth pass no Act without the Pope's Consent; no more can the Congregation House do now in England without the King's Consent: even as it hath always been used in the Parliament House: where no Act doth pass without the King's Royal Consent, either personally or under the Great Seal; whereby the Congregation can do now nothing but even as it pleased Cromwell.

Thus the King having the Pope's Authority, caused Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury, to make a Divorce betwixt him and

¹ The convocations of Canterbury and York paid respectively £100,000 and £18,840; but in February 1531 they did not grant the King 'all his request', for they only accepted his supremacy with the saving clause 'so far as the law of Christ allows'.

² Here Sherbrook momentarily goes forward to the Supremacy Act of 1534 and the events of 1535.

³ I.e., Fisher, More and the London Carthusians in the summer of 1535.

⁴ The Act in Restraint of Appeals (24 Hen. VIII cap. 12, 1533) and the Act for the Submission of the Clergy (25 Hen. VIII cap. 19, 1534) left the Archbishop with something immensely less than papal powers.

⁵ I.e. 'pat', meaning apt, exactly suitable to the purpose.

⁶ A reference to Henry's remarks to the Commons deputation (11 May 1532) which led to the Submission of the Clergy. Cromwell was probably by now advising him in these matters.

⁷ As Vicegerent Cromwell took precedence over all others in Convocation. Sherbrook is probably recalling the striking passage in Foxe, v. 378 *seqq.*, though this assembly (1536) was not an actual meeting of Convocation.

Queen Catherine, then his Wife: But whether the King was married to Anne Bulleyn before or after the Divorce, read the Chronicles and thou shalt see.¹

Now the King had obtained his Purpose touching his Marriage, old and new: He lacked nothing but the Lands and Goods of Religious Houses to maintain him the better against such Foes and Enemies that might rise for the abolishing of the Pope. And therefore through Cromwell's Counsel, which was ever ready in such matters, and because he should be no more Looser thereby, than he was when he practiced the same arts under the Cardinal; he called up all the Heads of such Houses that were under the yearly value of 300 Marks, to London, to the King. And by such Persuasion as was then used in the King's Behalf, they were glad, more for Fear than for Love, to give their Houses, Lands and Goods, to the King; and took Stipends to live out of the Exchequer:² So for a Goose, they had a Feather. Such is the Authority of a King within his Realm!

And in the Mean time there was no small Quarrel picked to Religion, both for superstition and Idolatry: and in that Point not without cause; for it was great. So had Covetousness blinded the whole Clergy, that they had no grace to reform any thing, were it never so vain and foolish, of their own accord: But all was Fish that came to the Net.

And thus when the King felt the Sweetness of the small Houses; even as the Fox and Wolf doth, that first worry Lambs and afterwards falleth to old sheep; even so he thought good to take the great Houses also. And then he went a more speedy way to work, seeing the other came so easily from the owners, caused all the Residue of Religious Houses to be given him by Act of Parliament:³ for it well might be thought, that when the owners themselves gave them to the King so freely, that those that were no owners would sooner bestow then of the King. For who will not get himself great Favour by such a gift, but also a great part thereof is likely to come to his share? Therefore to dispatch all abuses, all was plucked up by the Roots; good and Bad.

Now the Commons seeing by the Dissolution of the small Houses, to what end the Matter was likely to come unto; and what

¹ Henry and Anne were married about 25 January 1533. The marriage with Katherine was pronounced null and void by Cranmer at Dunstable on 23 May 1533.

² Inaccurate. The smaller monasteries were dissolved by the Act of 1536, not, like the greater monasteries, by piecemeal surrenders. Heads of houses were pensioned; the rank and file either received 'capacities' to leave religion and serve as secular priests, or else transferred to the greater houses of their respective orders. Sherbrook repeats this inaccuracy *infra*, p. 114.

³ Only in 1539 (31 Henry VIII cap. 13), by which time most of the greater houses had surrendered.

great Loss it would be to the poor-[13v (18)]-est sort of the Commonalty; which had the greater Commodity than the Rich had; although the Rich had no small Commodity thereby: but not then so much, as they had by the suppression of them: which made of Yeomen and Artificers Gentlemen, and of Gentlemen Knights, and so forth upwards; and of the poorest Sort, stark Beggars, assembled them¹ in Field against their King, contrary to their Allegiance and Fidelity, in Lincolnshire to the Number of 20000 Men; and immediately after to the Number of 40000 in Yorkshire:² which Commotions took no Effect; but gave over by entreaty,³ without Bloodshed: But many of them lost their Lives by hanging Drawing and quartering, according to the Laws of the Realm, as all Traitors do that will rebell against their King.

Thus thou seest that if the Commons could have helped it, they would not have left them so: but who can spronne⁴ against the Pricke? For that Man purposeth, God disposeth after his will: For how can it be otherwise thought, but that it was only the vengeance of God, that the Sherman's Son, raised out of the Dunghill, should do more than so many thousand of People, both spiritual and Temporal: not of the poorest sort, but of the best sort: such as Bishops, Abbats, yea and many of the Nobility that should have had all those Houses that were of their Ancestors Foundation, by the Common Law, if every House were dissolved: and the cheif Lord of whom the Land was holden, should have had the said Lands:⁵ which Founders, the cheif Lords, nor the Head of the House, nor the weeping Household were able to stay the Suppression and Spoil, neither in Parliament nor elsewhere. But every one lost that which was due to him by Law, without any offence committed or intended to be committed. Such is the great Wrath of God against Sinners, that stirred and used the Heart of the King, so much given to Covetousness and fleshly Pleasure, as an Instrument, that he could not content himself with Religious Houses; but caused the Parliament House, to give all the Colleges, Chantries, Hospitals, and Free Chapels in England, Ireland and Wales;⁶ not so much but

¹ I.e. the commons assembled themselves. Sherbrook's analysis of the causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace is extremely simplified and tendencious. Contrast e.g. R. R. Reid, *The King's Council in the North*, pp. 121 *seqq*, which represents a fair summary of the *contemporary* evidence.

² The maximum contemporary estimate, probably exaggerated by rumour. Wilfrid Holme said 25,000 and Lord Darcy 20,000. Cf. M. H. and R. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, i. 191.

³ Treaty; cf. Robert Parkyn's phraseology in *E.H.R.*, lxii. 70.

⁴ Spurn, i.e. kick.

⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 39. The Tudors had, of course, excellent reasons for rejecting this solution. Sherbrook is right in stressing the continued interest maintained in many religious houses by 'founders', i.e. founders' kin.

⁶ Not until 1545 (37 Hen. VIII cap. 4). Sherbrook returns to this Act p. 120 *infra*.

the Universities and all were given to his Hands;¹ the Key of all the knowledge within the Realm.

Such Regard had the Nobility of the higher House, and Knights and Burgesses of the Lower House to their Country! And yet, god wot, a man may not think that that House can do amiss. No; they regarded not so much as the Hospitals of the Poor, Blind, Sick and Lane;² but all was put to the King's Disposition: And no Marvell; he took so good order with Religious Houses before.

Thus whilst the King enriched himself with the spoil of his faith-[14 (19)]-full Subjects in time of Peace; which is worse than any Spoil committed in Warrs, ten times; this Cromwell, which was appointed of God for a Scourge to whip his Servants withall, for their Offence, was now cast to the Fire:³ I mean as a Traitour to his Prince, which before was worse than a Traytor to his Country and Common Weale for his own private Commodity,⁴ lost his Head, and all that he had gained by his crafty Dealings, both Lands and Goods: which he had gathered from the Clergy; which he thought might spare it well enough; seeing the Revenues being bestowed of Foreigners and Strangers within England, set in and placed by the Pope, came to the sum 70 000 Marks, and above; whereas the mere Revenues of the Crown came not to 30 000 pounds.⁵ By the which you may think that the Revenues of the whole Clergy was no small Matter, as is before proved.

Thus you have heard briefly, part of the Noble Acts and Doings of King Henry 8 brought to pass in his Life time within this Realm, touching the Reformation of Religion; more for his own Profit, than for the Profit of the Common Weale; as it proved by great Experience since his Death: Although his Doings is greatly extolled and praised by our English writers, which accuseth many

¹ The Edwardian Act specifically exempted the colleges of the universities and others, but despite the lack of such a clause in the Henrician Act, it would be absurd to imagine that the King intended to dissolve such foundations, which he had continued to treat generously throughout the Reformation crisis.

² Many hospitals had by now ceased to fulfill their original purpose; of those still functioning, a high proportion were continued at, or refounded after, the Edwardian dissolution. Such action usually resulted, however, from energetic local action, not from the initiative of the central government.

³ Cromwell fell 10 June and was executed 28 July 1540.

⁴ The usual unjust verdict on this constructive, patriotic and phenomenally industrious statesman, but it was not difficult for his enemies to leave him with this reputation, since he accepted presents on an even larger scale than most Tudor ministers.

⁵ More wild figures. Early in the reign of Henry VIII, the ordinary revenue of the Crown stood at about £140,000 (D. L. Keir, *Constitutional Hist. of Modern Britain*, pp. 12, 68). The figure given for payments to Rome is too large. For a summary of them, see H. Maynard Smith, *Pre-Reformation England*, pp. 15 *seqq.*, but their amount cannot be exactly estimated.

writers to be the Pope of Rome his Parasites; as though they were none themselves.

But it is no matter: let the one say what they will of the Pope of Rome; and the other likewise of the King of England: yet the time with Experience will cause the Truth of both Parts to be told: whether it is to their Praise or Dispraise: for every Tomme Truth¹ is not dead: but he had as good be dead: for Veritas odium parit, obsequium amicos.² But yet seeing all his former Doings is allowed and warranted by the Acts of Parliament (a Court not altogether without abuse and Blemish itself, if the Acts and Estatutes made in diverse Kings' Times be well pondered) it will not be far amiss to declare more at large, how he did bring his Purpose about by means of his Parliament Men; which was as ready in Queen Maries Time to affirm the same Things false and ungodly, as they were before in her Father's Time to affirm true and godly.

Therefore it is near Folly, and no Godliness at all for any common or ignorant Subject to stand to Death in Defence and Overthrow of such Laws, except in war, made by the Commandement of the King, for the time [14v (20)] being: wherein the Soldier is excused before God for obedience sake, and all the Burthen lieth of the King.³

Therefore as is aforesaid, he began first with the whole Clergy to try whether they would stand together or no: if they had, it had been very likely he would have gone no further: For as the Dog which runs at the whole Flock of Sheep, which flyeth altogether for fear, giveth Occasion to catch one after another and so forth, untill all be worried: even so when the King perceived them all to be afraid of their goods, he thought they would be more afraid of their Lives: which caused him to proceed on as his Intent was: for he knew well thereby, that they being nousled⁴ up in great worldly Wealth was unlikely to prove good Soldiers in Matters of Religion: according to Christ's words: saying, he that buildeth his House upon sand, when the storms cometh it falleth; for their Minds were altogether as the Proverb is; upon their Halfpenny:⁵ For if they had not been more afraid of the King of England then they were of the King of Heaven: the Premunire, which touched their Goods and somewhat their Bodies, would not have made them to have made such a Submission as they did: which was the Cause afterward of

¹ More commonly, 'Tom Tell-Truth'; cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. Tom, 7c.

² Terence, *Andria*, l. 68.

³ I.e. on the King; a highly interesting inference, doubtless shared by many who had witnessed the vicissitudes of the Tudor period.

⁴ Nurtured in, habituated to. More (*Confutation*, 1532) speaks of people 'nowseled in the false heresies.' But the other meaning of the word, 'to have one's nose pressed into something' was probably not far from Sherbrook's mind. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. 'nuzzle'.

⁵ For similar phrases, see *N.E.D.*, s.v. halfpenny, 2.

the Loss, both of their goods, Land and many of their Lives, as shall appear hereafter.

But yet for all their quaking the King shook forth of their Coffers 500 0000¹ for an earnest penny of the Bargain,¹ then at hand to be performed, both to their Poverty and great Reproach in the End.

For although they paid so well for the King's gracious Pardon so liberally bestowed of his loving Subjects, the most reverend Father in God etc. yet diverse of the Clergy were excepted. By the good success hereof the King seeing how to remove all the Stops that might hinder and keep him from the Mark he shot at: that was, first his Divorce, and then the Spoil of the Clergy: He caused it first to be enacted, that there should no Person within the Realm appeal to the Pope of Rome for any Cause: and by that means he was not to be judged by any Person in any Spiritual Matter but by himself,² and by his own Subjects: which is all one by a mean; for what Subject dare speak against his King?

Now this Corner Stone laid, the Building goeth further handsomely upon the Ground Work: that is to say, by Submission of the Clergy aforesaid wherein they grant to make no Canon, or hold any Synod without the Kings consent;³ with many things more in that Act that confirmeth their Submission; little to their Profit, although it may be somewhat for their Ease; seeing Rome is brought [15 (21)] to their doors: for now seeing the People hath no more to do with the Pope, it is thought good he shall have no more Profit forth of England according to the old saying: No Penny, no Pater noster. Yet no doubt the Pope could have been contented to have bestowed xx Pater nosters for 1^d such as they weare either in Court or out of Court by way of Blessing or Cursing.

Therefore an Estatute was made prohibiting the Payment of Annates or first Fruits of Benefices to Rome, and for the making and consecrating of Bishops within England without his Aid,⁴ which was not a little forth of the Pope's way. But whether it brought the Clergy of England out of their fair way into some hubby⁵ and thorney ground or Desert, it will appear by the Experience of their Journey hereafter.

¹ If this be an accurate copy of Sherbrook's figure, it presumably represents an arbitrary attempt to estimate the total sum extracted by Henry VIII from the English Church.

² By the Act in Restraint of Appeals, 24 Hen. VIII cap. 12 (1533).

³ By the Act for the Submission of the Clergy, 25 Hen. VIII cap. 19 (1534).

⁴ The Conditional Restraint of Annates, 23 Hen. VIII cap. 20 (1532), was followed by the Absolute Restraint, 25 Hen. VIII cap. 20 (1534). The latter forbade the procurement from Rome of bulls, etc., for making bishops; it also subjected deans and chapters to the penalties of *praemunire* if they failed to elect the King's nominee to a bishopric.

⁵ Rough. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. hub, 4c: an abruptly raised piece of ground. Bunyan has, 'all . . . hubs, and hills and holes shall now be taken away'.

But yet the Pope had not his full acquittance sealed of the Receipt of his Profit forth of England: therefore there is another Act made to enable the Archbishop of Canterbury, in small Matters, under the Bishop's seal, and in great Matters, with the King's Confirmation under the great Seal, to grant Licenses, Dispensations, Pardons and such like to the Subjects in Spiritual Matters at home,¹ which is now as gainfull to the King and the Bishop as it was in time past to the Pope, being now discharg'd thereby of the Receit of many and sundry sums of Money, called Exaccions, particularly for the most part named in the said Estatute, touching both the Laity and the Spirituality; lest he should be troubled in his Account before God for them. So much did the Holy King tender the Holy Pope, or else himself: whether of both, judge you: for his subjects gained small thereby, as Experience hath proved the same.

Now these obstacles being well taken away, the King cometh nearer the Mark; for he is even now at the first Pricke:² that is to say, is married with Lady Anne Bulleyn: The Divorce had, between him and Queen Catherine Dowager, adjudged by Bishop Cranmer and other Commissioners for that Purpose of his own making: for the Bishop of Rome was Jack out of Office in those Matters, and many others: But not in all; for as yet he is not utterly banished: and therefore, because one Body cannot have two Heads and be no Monster; an Estatute is made which maketh the King Supream Head of the Church of England:³ and thereby the Pope hath neither Head nor Tail in the English Church: no not so much as a place for the least Joint of his Body.

Now God be with the Wealth and great Renown⁴ of the Clergymen: and when they come to so much again, let them learn to acknowlege no [15v (22)] more than they know certainly for to be for their advantage; for where they quaked for the Premunire, and were fain to get their pardon with the Cost of 1000 000^{li 5} then they thought little of the Net, that now is cast to catch them withall, which passeth the Premunire: I mean the Oath that they must take to the King and against the Pope; or else loose all, and be imprisoned all the Days of their Life; and so lose Wealth and Liberty or peradventure Health too; except they can digest Imprisonment the better: for now the King hath hit the second Pricke he shot at: I mean the great part of the Clergy's Profit, (and none he will have hereafter) that is the 1st Fruits and annual Tenths of all Spiritual and Temporal possessions belonging to the Clergy: for seeing the Pope cannot have such Profit, by reason of the former Estatute, the

¹ The Dispensations Act, 25 Hen. VIII cap. 21 (1534).

² Target, in archery.

³ The Act of Supremacy, 26 Hen. VIII cap. 1 (1534).

⁴ Here 'Revenues' has been struck out and 'Renown' written above.

⁵ *Sic* for £100,000; see *supra*, p. 105.

King must have them: Quia quod non capit Christus, capit Fiscus.¹ The Clergy doth pay somewhat more to the King at home than they did to the Pope afar off:² In Consideration they are eased of the Charge thereof in sending so far to the Pope, in Carriage whereof the carrier might fortune to be robbed and they double charged, if the Pope was not the Holier; as seldom he is in such money matters.³

Well, now seeing he hath got by Estatute Law⁴ one whole year's Profit of every Spiritual Promotion, as also the tenth part also to be paid yearly, which riseth as well of Religious Houses, as of Bishopricks, Colleges, Parsonages, Vicarages and such like; a man would think the King well played the part of a Temporal or Lay Pope at the first onsett: for there was, as is aforesaid, 10000 Monasteries, every Monastery. one with another of the yearly value of 500^{li} which cannot come to so little as the yearly Value of 4970000^{li}.⁵ And the value of every Bishoprick the one with another was of the yearly Value of 6000^{li},⁶ which Bishopricks, being 22 in Number must needs be worth yearly 6 score thousand pounds of the best: and the Parsonages of 400005 Parish Churches,⁷ wherof every Parsonage one with another is of the yearly Value of 40^{li} (deducting the one half of them in consideration of the Parsonage impropriated, beside all the Vicarages, and Colleges, Chantries, Hospitalls and such Like) cannot come to so little as the yearly value of 400005^{li}, and all the Colleges and other spiritual Livings cannot be so little as 20000^{li} yearly.

Yet all the first Fruits and the tenth part of all these satisfied not the King for although the Spiritual Pope was very hungry, the Temporal Pope was [16 (23)] far hungrier.⁸

And because the King had well broken his Fast with the first Fruits and Tenths he caused by the means of his servant and Vice

¹ The phrase occurs in several medieval writers and has been traced back as far as a pseudo-Augustinian sermon. Cf. E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, pp. 174 seqq.

² The King in 1535 reassessed clerical incomes by the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, so enabling himself to levy enhanced tenths and first fruits; Sherbrook might fairly have added that, by his own time, the *Valor* already represented a considerable understatement of clerical incomes.

³ One of the passages which shows Sherbrook as by no means an adulator of the Papacy.

⁴ By the Act annexing First Fruits and Tenths to the Crown, 26 Hen. VIII cap. 3 (1534).

⁵ A fantastic figure. Cf. *supra* p. 35.

⁶ The papal taxation-table given in P. Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, i. 31 n. 3 suggests an average of £3,000, but an average of 14 English sees taken from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* gives only £1,800. Research on episcopal finances is clearly overdue, but meanwhile Sherbrook seems guilty of a huge overestimate. Did he mean to include the revenues of deans and chapters?

⁷ Presumably for 40,005; cf. *supra*, p. 35.

⁸ Here he repeats his inaccurate account of the fall of the lesser monasteries. Cf. *supra*, p. 107.

Gerent Cromwell, all the Heads of Religious Houses of 200^{li} by the year and under (under which value were very few¹) to be called up to London, and there so shrove them by one Means or other, as sometimes by fair Promises and sometimes by Threats; as it may well be gathered by the flattering Preamble of diverse Estatutes made for the same Purpose; and caused all the Heads aforesaid to give up into the King's Hand under the Covent Seal, all their Lands and Goods; and made the same Gift to be inrolled in the Chancery: the which thing being finished, he sent them home shryven more clean of thrift than of Sin.

And seeing such small Oaks gave suche Rush² into his Coffe from their Fall, he thought the great ones would give a far greater Fall, and be more beneficial in quartering them into many small peices: and therefore he thought good to take some Pause before he would put his Axe to the Root of the great abbeys: and in the mean time dallied and played with the Clergy, as the Cat doth with the Mouse, before she worry the Mouse and eat her: and as doth the Hunter oftentimes useth to take some Pastime with the Game before he kill it and prey thereupon: even so the King did: for he caused an Estatute to be made, that the Subjects should pay no tenths of their spiritual Promotions, for the first year they paid their first fruits:³ for to have Tenths and 1st Fruits to pay all in one year was impossible: for he that taketh all the yearly profit, can have no money for that year, except they pay double Tenths in the next year after. Which graciously and lovingly considered of[,] the King [?did] somewhat better than he did in many other Things of greater weight.

And yet this weighed on their Shoulders heavy enough, and more than enough (if their Sins had not deserved the same) for the King caused an Act to be made for the Help thereof; and now because most part of the Tyths, whereof some were come to the King and othersome ready to come in hast after, by reason of the Parsonages impropriate, which thing the common People perceiving to be contrary to the Foundation of such Parsonages and first Payment of their Tyths that was only given for the maintainance of [16v (24)] of the poor and God's Service, as in ministring of the Sacraments and Prayer and Teaching the People, now by that means to come into Laymen's Hands, begun to wax of so good Conscience, that they made no Reckoning of the Matter, if they paid not their

¹ Actually about 291 houses were liable to be dissolved under the Act of 1536; of these some 47 were licensed to continue (P. Hughes, *op. cit.*, i. 292-5).

² Here evidently synonymous with 'trash', i.e. twigs, cuttings. More commonly in Northern dialect, a brake, or thick growth Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. rush, sb ³.

³ A modification made in 1535 by 27 Hen. VIII cap. 8.

Tyths at all;¹ caused another Act to be made for the more speedy and true Payment of the Tyths.² But it was better for the Clergy when the Tyths were paid them of mere Devotion than now by Coaction and Force of the Law Temporal.

And at this Parliament was an Estatute also made to give the King Power to nominate 32 Persons for the making of Ecclesiastical Laws:³ for a new Pope, new Laws, according to the old Proverb. No doubt such Canons and Rules will help the Clergy as the Devill amended his Damme Shoulkes⁴ that was; where they were easy before, brake them quite;⁵ all with Estatutes. Yet will not serve to abolish the spiritual Pope out of the Peoples Heart, that still loves to talk of his Goodness:⁶ which thing the new temporal Pope cannot abide, no more than the Child that is Heir to his Father of a good Living to hear tell that his Father should be revived, being supposed to be dead.

Therefore to kill the old Pope clean, it is thought good for utter extinguishment of his Authority, and make another Act and lay more weight upon him, that he rise no more. In which Estatute is another Oath framed against him, of far greater Force than the former Oath shaped before:⁷ for this may be the old Pope his winding sheet; it is so large. Yet he rose again in Queen Mary's time as will appear hereafter. Although the Refusal of this Oath now brought many one to his End: as Sir Thomas More, Fisher, Bishop of Rochester and diversse other religious Persons,⁸ that could not with their Conscience take it.

And now seeing the People is thus hardly bound to the new Stake, made of good Heart of Oak, not likely to rot of long time:

¹ As monasteries had commonly farmed out the tithes of their appropriated livings to laymen, the lay-rectors who became so common at the dissolution constituted no startling change so far as tithe-payers were concerned. Yet in the diocese of York, such farming by monasteries had probably been less common than elsewhere, and tithe-suits seem to have become much more numerous after the lay-rectors took over. Cf. J. S. Purvis, *Select Tithe Causes* (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser. cxiv), p. viii.

² By 27 Hen. VIII cap. 20 (1535): later by 32 Hen. VIII cap. 7 (1540).

³ By 27 Hen. VIII cap. 15.

⁴ In margin: 'Shonkes', i.e. shanks, needed by the sense. The puzzled transcriber also suggests, wrongly, 'shackles'.

⁵ Cf. Brinklow, *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors* (E.E.T.S. Extra Ser., xxii), p. 34: 'It is amended, even as the devel mendyd his damys legg (as it is in the proverbe): when he shuld have set it right, he bracke it quyte in pecys'.

⁶ I.e. they did so in the time of Henry VIII. The subsequent present tenses show that Sherbrook is speaking not of the Elizabethan period, but of the thirties.

⁷ The First Succession Act (25 Hen. VIII cap. 22, 1534) included a clause that every subject of full age should swear to defend and observe it. More and Fisher were imprisoned for rejecting this oath.

⁸ In particular several London Carthusians and Dr. Reynolds of Syon, who perished May-June 1535. The Yorkshire example was that of George Lazenby of Jervaulx (*Lollards and Protestants*, pp. 79 seqq.).

it is good somewhat to refresh their minds, to make them take all things in the better that may fortune to follow hereafter.¹

Therefore an Estatute was made for the Restitution of the 1st fruits of the time of the Vacation to the next Incumbent: for it is not Reason that he should pay for that he never had:² for all the vacation time the Profit goeth to the Bishop, to the end he may see the Church served untill another [17 (25)] Incumbent be had: But yet the Estatute doth not make so much for the next Incumbent his Avail, as it doth for the new Pope's Avail.

And because so many of the Clergy were of so good conscience that they cared not what came of their sheep, so that they might have the Fleece: for such might neither take Pains to teach their Parishioners, nor find in their Heart to feed the Poor by way of good Hospitality; Although the Storm of God's wrath even then did hang over their Heads, as the dark thick and black clouds daily encreasing, did prognosticate the same: wherefore an Estatute was made to compell them to keep Residence upon their Benefices. And another act was made at this Parliament for Confirmations of all such Licenses, Dispensations, Bulls and such like Faculties, as had been purchased before from the Pope of Rome.³ For they were very sore shaken and annulled by diverse of the former Estatutes, that were made to the Overthrow of the Pope's Authority and Doings. Therefore it was needfull that such Holes as they had made should be amended and clouted⁴ up again, least diverse People should have taken, as they well might, Hurt thereby. Nor most commonly no ancient Laws and Rules are broken by other new Laws latter made, but there cometh much Hindrance to the subjects before they can be redressed and helped again.

Now whilst the King hath been somewhat occupied in the Parliaments as you have heard, he yet once again groped the Clergy. For subtilly he made Shews and Speeches that the greatest and most wealthy Monasteries should stand, and all was, for he meant nothing less, to the end to cause them to look once again into the bottom of their Coffers, for another peice of Money; which was not a little that was given again[,] trusting thereby, that by that means he would suppress no more: But all his Fetch was, to get by all the Policy he could, all their ready Money from them; least upon the Suppression of them they would have concealed it from him.

¹ I.e., to make them better understand everything that follows.

² I.e., since the bishop took the profit during the vacancy, the new incumbent should not be burdened with the first fruits. The Statute in question is 28 Hen. VIII cap. 11 (1536).

³ These two provisions occur in the Dispensations Act, 25 Hen. VIII cap. 21 (1533); section xxi confirms the former Act against Pluralities and Non-Residence, while sections xxiii-xxvii confirm (under closely defined conditions) former dispensations granted by Rome, insofar as they are not contrary to the laws of the realm.

⁴ Patched.

Therefore when he had thus wrung them by the Nose that it bled withall, he went speedily to work and hit the Mark altogether that he had so long shot at: that was, to have all the Abbeyes, Nunneries, Fryeries, Colleges, Hospitals¹ and all other Religious Houses of what Nature or Quality soever they were of, with their Goods, Lands, and Possessions which now was granted to him by Parliament: For what thing would be denied him either in Parliament or without, think you; that had so many about him, that gaped for no small part thereof. For whole Abbeyes was then nothing with the King, he² came so easily by them.

Therefore he made large Gifts³ to diverse of his Nobility and other [17v (26)] inferior Persons temporal, of other Mens Goods and Lands: I mean of his faithful subjects, the Clergy People; whom when he had thus bereaft them of all, and turned them of the doors; then there was Provision made by Act of Parliament for them. But what was it think you? Pensions you will say. No truly it was to authorise and enable them to purchase more hereafter if they could get it, and to sue and be sued.⁴ Much like the Owner of the Bees that taketh all theyr Honny away from them in August, and permitteth them to get more against Winter to live on, or else die for lack of Food. And yet nevertheless they had Pensions granted them during their Lives: but such as in Comparison is a Feather instead of a Goose, or a Shyve⁵ of Bread in lieu of the whole Loaf taken from them.⁶

Now at this Parliament the King had Authority given him to make new Bishops and Bishopricks by his Letters Patents:⁷ for still he goeth on to blind the People with godly and profitable Shewes for the Common Weale, as it seemeth, and to amend that that was amiss. But surely all is brought out of Frame by his Amendment. Read the Preamble of this Act, and see what a fine Matter is pretended,⁸ and to what end all those glorious Words come to. Experience, God wot, hath proved them to be Blossoms without Fruit, a rotten wall fair painted above, fair Tombs and

¹ Though not, in general, affected by the Acts of 1536 and 1539, hospitals were formally included in the latter (31 Hen. VIII cap. 13). Those of St. John of Jerusalem were dissolved by a third Act in 1540 (32 Hen. VIII cap. 24).

² 'He' superimposed upon 'who'.

³ An interestingly early example of this still common story. Of the 1593 original grants made in the reign of Henry VIII only 41 were gifts, and another 28 combinations of gift with sale or exchange (Savine's table in H. A. L. Fisher *Political Hist. of Eng. 1485-1547*, p. 499).

⁴ By 31 Hen. VIII cap. 6 (1539) former religious persons might sue or be sued.

⁵ Slice; cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. shive.

⁶ On the worth of monastic pensions see A. G. Dickens in *E.H.R.*, lv. 415-17.

⁷ By 31 Hen. VIII cap. 9 (1539).

⁸ Like many Henrician Acts, this one has a grandiloquent preamble, setting forth the educational and charitable benefits allegedly intended.

foul stinking Carions within; and likewise are the Preambles of the other Estatutes, touching these Clergy matters; for *Fistula dulce canit, Volucrem dum decipit Auceps*.¹

And this whilst the King went about to enrich himself, and diverse others, that were wealthy enough before, if they had not too much, and to impoverish the Clergy and many thousands of his Commons by the Fall of the Religious Houses; and to bring other Matters to pass, smelling more of vice than wisdom, through the quarrelling with Religion wherein he was baptised and brought up unto this time; Diverse and many fond² opinions and sects began to spring up in certain Articles concerning Christians' Religion. And was it any Marvel? When it was so abased by the Preambles of the Estatutes made thereabouts, and the Liberty given therein for every person thereof to speak³ at full.

Therefore it was to see some Remedy to suppress such false Opinions and Heresies as came in Place of Superstition: which is [18 (27)] far better for the Common Wealth, than Heresies, Sects and Schismes be; and yet neither of them good. For the one keepeth Peace and Quietness; the other stirreth up Strife, wars and Bloodshed in all places, where it taketh Root; as partly it appeareth by the History of the Bohemians in the Acts and Monuments of Fox p. 764, 765, 766, 767,⁴ and partly by the Preamble of this Estatute made for the Abolishing of this diversity of Opinions; in which Estatute are all the principal parts of Religion used in Monasteries, allowed and confirmed to be good and godly as the Natural Body and Blood of Christ after the Consecration in the Sacrament of the Altar.⁵

Which being allowed, then here can be no Idolatry or Superstition committed in Worship done to it; because it is God. And that the Communion under both kinds is not necessary for the Common People; and that Priests may not marry: and that vows of Chastity, made either by Man or Woman to God, may not be broken: that it is necessary that private Masses be continued and admitted in the English Church; and that auricular Confessions is expedient and necessary to be reteined and continued, used and

¹ Dionysius Cato, *Disticha de Moribus*, i. 27: 'the fowler sings with sweet-toned pipe while he snares the bird'.

² Foolish.

³ The last three words of the sentence have been numbered, presumably by the copyist, to suggest that the original read 'to speak thereof'.

⁴ Foxe (iii. 405-584) gives an elaborate account of the Hussite troubles in Bohemia.

⁵ I.e. the Six Articles Act, 31 Hen VIII cap. 14 (1539), which upheld Transubstantiation, denied the necessity of communion in both kinds for salvation, forbade clerical marriage, asserted the binding effect of vows of chastity, and the validity of private masses and auricular confession. This Sherbrook continues to describe in the succeeding paragraph.

frequented in the Church of God: to say to the contrary was made Heresy, and to be burned therefore.

Now I pray thee, good Reader, consider well of this Act, and of all them gone before touching the Suppression of Religious Houses; and see if thou can espy for what Causes they were suppressed: for it seemeth no other Cause but to Spoil them of all their Wealth and Livings.

Now then if so great Wealth will come by the abolishing of old Religion, and bringing in new in place, who will not have every day a new Religion? None but God's Fools. Now therefore when the King hath got that thing for the which he hath fished so long; he is content to help¹ the Breaches in Religion all he may: but all is in vain and too late: for it is easier to give Water his Course, than to stop it again.² But yet he is so content that always nothing should be done without his Consent: which shall make all things sure not to be against his Profit in any thing: as it appeareth by the Estatute made concerning true opinions and the declaration of Christ's Religion. As though Christ's Religion was not truly taught before his time. The Preamble of which Estatute is worth the Reading to see what Inconvenience is found out by Experience of so small a time through the Alteration of Religion: which although it be espied, yet it is no let³ to the King to go forward to the Suppressions of more Houses of Religion as the Hospitals of St. James⁴ of Jerusalem in England and Ireland: [18v (28)] Houses of great Possessions in Lands and Wealth and Goods: For there was nothing could lett his Journey, whatsoever Inconveniences chanced by the Way; so that he was sure it touched not his Body; Howsoever it touched his soul. The Owners of which Hospitals sped better than many of [their] Neighbours did before them: whether it was that the King had well dined now with the Suppression of all the other; and therefore might better spare Relief to them that lost all; or because that those Houses was so wealthy, so that he might allow better Pensions and Portions of Goods to the Brethren thereof, it may be a Question. For it appeareth by the Estatute, whereby the said Hospitals are specially given to the King and the Pensions granted out of the same at the Suppression thereof, came to the yearly sum of 3400^{li} at the least one way or another;⁵ Besides all the Goods, whereof every one had a portion: and yet

¹ I.e. mend, repair.

² For its date, a very shrewd observation.

³ Hindrance.

⁴ Cole has marked 'St. James' with a query; the error is seemingly his rather than Sherbrook's. The reference is to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (the Hospitallers), abolished in England by separate Act of Parliament in 1540 (32 Hen. VIII cap. 24).

⁵ The pensions granted under this act were munificent, Cf. R. W. Dixon, *Hist. of the Church of England*, ii. 235-6.

no small part was left for the King; besides the Spoil of the said Houses, which was stately builded.

By these and such like you may estimate what great Wealth came to the King's Hands, by the Suppression of all the Houses whereof he had the Spoil in his Life time.

Now among the Estatutes made at this Parliament there was one Estatute made to make Proclamations, set forth by the King and his Council to be of as great Force to many Intents as an Act of Parliament: specially when any Proclamation touched Heresy or Religion: By force whereof, many Proclamations was set forth afterwards.¹ But yet for all this Opinions did grow and encrease so fast among the People that the King caused an Act to be made for Restraint of the Reading of diverse English Books; yea of the Bible among the Common People.²

Thus you see what Troubles hath risen ever sithence the going about and pretending to make the Divorce betwixt the King and his Wife, Queen Catherine and the Suppression of the Religious Houses. With the Suppression whereof he was not fully satisfied, until he had also all the Colleges, Chantries, free-Chapels, Hospitals, Fraternities, Brotherhoods, Guilds, Stipendary Priests having Perpetuity for ever: to the which he did pick a Quarrel, not for any Superstition or Idolatry used in them: but only because that the Governours thereof spent the Revenues not in alms and so forth according to the Rules and Minds of the Founders thereof.³

O Good God! what occasion is sought to take all away, that by any means may help or profit the poor Commons: even as the Wolf that found Fault with the Lamb for troubling the Well Head, although the Lamb drank far [19 (29)] beneath the Well Head.

Thus thou seest that there is nothing now left to the Clergy but the Bishopricks and a few Parsonages and poor Vicarages. Whereby diverse Parsonages and Vicarages are become so poor that the Profit thereof will not find a Curate to serve the Cure without uniting two Churches together: that is to pull down one Church and make of both Parishes but one Parish; as by the said Act of

¹ For modern views of the Proclamations Act, see E. R. Adair in *E.H.R.*, xxxii. 34 and G. R. Elton in *ibid.*, lxxv. 208.

² 'An Act for the Advancement of the True Religion', 34 & 35 Hen. VIII cap. 1 (1542), forbade the common people to read the New Testament in English.

³ Cf. p. 108 *supra*. The Chantries Act of 1545 (37 Hen. VIII cap. 4) charges the governors and patrons of such foundations with embezzlement of their endowments and the Chantry Surveys provide detailed evidence as to the truth of this charge. As Sherbrook remarks, this Act alleged no doctrinal reasons for the step; it has a brutally frank admission that war-expenses provided the motive.

Union of Churches¹ it is declared: whereby it is greatly to be pondered and marvelled at, to see that in times past so many Parishioners as were able to build two Churches and maintain them with their Curates and Ornaments; and now is not able to maintain one: yea in many places at this day the Towns is pulled down that was able both to build a Church and maintain the same with a Curate sufficiently endowed, and either the Church standeth in the Feilds alone, or else quite destroyed: which is a more easy way and more profitable to the Lord and Owners of the Town where the Church stood, than to make a Union thereof.² But what Profit cometh to the poor Commons by such doings, let all men judge!

Thus you may see how Devotion doth encrease in England by abolishing Superstition and Idolatry, with preaching of the Gospel.

And whilst all things were thus in bringing to pass, such tossing there was about Religion; that one hanged for Papistry, as they term it; and mean the old Religion; and another burned for Heresy, as they call it; I mean the new Religion. For those that held with the Religion used in this Realm before the Dissolution of abbeyes are called Papists; and those that held with the Religion used after the Suppression was then called Hereticks; and are now called Protestants, yet the King not having all the wealth that he had by Religious Houses consumed, although the most part was gone:³ meddled not with the dissolving and suppressing all Colleges, Chantries, and Free Chapels and Hospitals during his Life: for he lived not long after.⁴

Now that thou hast heard of the Ways and Means used to the Overthrow of all Religious Houses and Abbeyes, and of the Clergy's Wealth, and the great Controversies in Religion; in the meantime it shall not be amiss to let thee know how and in what order they were visited, spoiled and destroyed; so that in most places it cannot be perceived where they stood: and their Lands are so dispersed abroad into so many Persons Hands, that there be few Subjects of any Living that have not some part thereof:⁵ yea, many of them

¹ 'An Act for the Union of Churches not exceeding the Value of six pounds', 37 Hen. VIII cap. 21 (1545). It chiefly affected towns with a multiplicity of small, poor parishes unfitted to attract clergy of ability. York, an excellent example, had its own Act, 1 Edward VI cap. 9, whereby some 15 of its 40 parish churches were adjudged superfluous and ultimately united with others. Cf. the list in C. B. Knight, *Hist. York*, pp. 388-9. The Lincoln Act is Private Act 2 & 3 Edward VI cap. 9.

² A sidelight on the problem of 'lost villages'.

³ A reference to the fact that Henry had sold the greater part of the monastic lands largely in order, as we now know, to pay the cost of the Franco-Scottish War.

⁴ Substantially true, though a number of collegiate foundations surrendered in the years 1541-7. Cf. Dixon, *op. cit.*, ii. 381-2.

⁵ This distribution of monastic properties into a great number of hands is a picture amply confirmed by modern research. Cf. *supra*, p. 39.

hath their whole Inheritance forth of the Clergy Land; and that hard it would be to know what Lands belonged in times past [19v (30)] and what not to the said Houses; and where the Monasteries and Colleges stood; if it were not for the Records of the Exchecquer and other Courts; and the Conveyances of the said Houses and Lands made from the King to his Subjects; and from one Subject to another, that particularly doth declare every thing by itself: By the Means whereof both the Houses and the Lands belonging to them; yea to every House by itself will ever be known.

In the pulling down of which Houses and in so distributing of their Possession¹ among the Subjects was used no small policy: for by that meane every one both in Parliament and forth of Parliament will be against the setting them up again howsoever the Religion doth change: as it appeareth by the Act of Parliament made in Queen Marie's time.² But yet nothing is impossible to God, which setteth up and plucketh down, when all men thinketh least thereof.

In the plucking down of which Houses for the most part this Order was taken: that the Visitors should come suddenly upon every House and unawares (for they never looked to be visited out of the doors, seeing they had pleased the King so well with the ready money bestowed of him, in good hope of the standing thereof as it is aforesaid) to the end to take them napping, as the Proverb is; least if they should have had so much as any Inkeling of their Coming, they would have made Conveyance of some part of their own Goods to help themselves withall when they were turned forth of their Houses.³ and both Reason and Nature might well have moved them so to have done: although it will be said all was given to the King by Act of Parliament; and so they had neither goods, Houses or Possessions. And [for] these they had to give the King great thanks, yea pray for him upon their black Beads, that was so gracious a Prince to them, to suffer them to stay so long after that all was given from them. And therefore if the Visitors, being the King's officers and Commissioners in that Behalf took their Dinner with them, and then turned them forth to seek their Lodging at night, or at the furthest the next day in the Morning, where they could find it, (as it was done in Deed) they did no wrong; nor truly no great Right: For so soon as the Visitors were entred within the Gates they called the Abbot and other Officers of the House, and caused them to deliver up to them all their Keys and took an Inventory of all their Goods, both within doors and without: for all such Beasts, Horses, Sheep, and such Cattell as were abroad [20 (31)] in pastures or Grange Places, the Visitors caused to be

¹ *Sic.*

² I.e. by 1 & 2 Philip and Mary cap. 8, (sections xxxi-ii, xxxviii-xl) which assures the possession of former ecclesiastical lands to their lay purchasers.

³ Many had, of course, already made such conveyances. Cf. G. Baskerville, *English Monks*, pp. 193 *seqq.*; A. L. Rowse, *Tudor Cornwall*, ch. viii *passim*.

brought into their Presence: and when they had so done, turned the Abbat with all his Covent and Household, furth of the Doors.¹

Which thing was not a little Grief to the Covent and all the Servants of the House departing one from another and specially such as with their Conscience could not break their Profession: for it would have made an Heart of Flint to have melted and weeped to have seen the breaking up of the House, and their sorrowfull departing; and the sudden spoil that fell the same day of their departure from the House. And every Person had every thing good cheap; except the poor Monks, Fryers, and Nuns that had no Money to bestow of any thing: as it appeared by the Suppression of an abbey, hard by me, called the Roche Abbey;² a House of White Monks; a very fair builded House all of Freestone; and every House vaulted with Freestone, and covered with Lead (as the Abbeyes was in England as well as the Churches be). At the Breaking up whereof an Uncle of mine was present, being well acquainted with certain of the Monks there; and when they were put forth of the House, one of the Monks, his Friend, told him that every one of the Covent had given to him his Cell,³ wherein he lied:⁴ wherein was not any thing of Price, but his Bed and Apparell, which was but simple and of small Price. Which Monk willed my Uncle to buy something of him; who said, I see nothing that is worth Money to my use: No said he; give me ii^d for my Cell Door, which was never made with v^s. No said my Uncle, I know not what to do with it (for he was a Young Man unmarried, and then neither stood need of Houses nor Doors). But such Persons as afterward bought their Corn or Hay or such like, found all the doors either open or the Locks and Shackles plucked away, or the Door itself taken away, went in and took what they found, filched it away.

¹ Unlike the passage on Roche Abbey, which follows, these passages presumably represent imaginative writing rather than second-hand reporting. It seems unlikely that, in general, religious persons can have been surprised to the extent suggested.

² Despite his local knowledge, Sherbrook chose a singularly poor example, if he wished to illustrate the hardships of the dispossessed. Henry Cundall, last Abbot of Roche, surrendered with 17 monks 23 June 1539. He was allowed to take his books, a fourth of the plate, cattle and household stuff, a chalice, a vestment and £30 in money, together with a convenient portion of corn. He was still enjoying his annual pension of £33 in 1553. Each monk had half a year's pension in advance and 20/- toward his apparel, while to each servant was granted a reward of half a year's wages (Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, v. 506; J. H. Aveling, *Hist. of Roche Abbey*, pp. 87-8).

³ At the Coventry Charterhouse, Dr. London gave 'to every brodor his celle' (H. Ellis, *Original Letters*, 3rd Ser., iii. 183). The churchwardens' accounts at Ecclesfield show this parish purchasing some of the Roche vestments in 1542 (Aveling *op. cit.*, p. 91).

⁴ Lay.

Some took the Service Books that lied in the Church and laid them upon their Waine Coppes¹ to peice the same: some took Windowes of the Hay laith² and hid them in their Hay; and likewise they did of many other Things: For some pulled forth the Iron Hooks out of the walls that bought none, when the yeomen and Gentlemen of the Country had bought the Timber of the Church: For the Church was the first thing that was put to the spoil; and then the Abbat's Lodgine,³ Dortor, and Frater, with the Cloister and all the Buildings thereabout, within the Abbey Walls: for nothing was spared but the Ox-houses and swi[n]ecoates and such other Houses of Office, that stood without the Walls; which had more Favour shewed them than the very Church itself: which was [20v (32)] done by the Advice of Cromwell, as Fox reporteth in his Book of Acts and Monuments;⁴ It would have pitied any Heart to see what tearing up of the Lead there was, and plucking up of Boards, and throwing down of the Sparres; and when the Lead was torn off and cast down into the Church, and the Tombs in the Church all broken (for in most Abbeys were diverse Noble Men and Women, yea and in some Abbeys, Kings; whose Tombs were regarded no more than the Tombs of all other inferior Persons: For to what end should they stand, when the Church over them was not spared for their Cause.) and all things of Price, either spoiled, carped⁵ away or defaced to the uttermost.⁶

The persons that cast the Lead into foders, pluck'd up all the Seats in the Choir, wherein the Monks sat when they said service; which were like to the Seats in Minsters, and burned them, and melted the Lead therewithall: although there was wood plenty within a flight shot of them: for the Abbey stood among the Woods and the Rocks of Stone: In which Rocks was Pewter Vessels found that was conveyed away and there hid: so that it seemeth every Person bent himself to filch and spoil what he could: yea even such Persons were content to spoil them, that seemed not two days

¹ Cop can mean either the beam between a pair of drawing-oxen, or the part of the waggon which hangs over the shaft-horse (Halliwell, *Dict. of Archaic and Provincial Words*, s.v. cop). The larger book-backs of the period are often stout wooden boards covered with thick leather, and might serve for a variety of repairs.

² Barn, a northern and North Midland word (Wright, *Eng. Dialect Dict.*; *N.E.D.*, s.v. lathe).

³ *Sic.*

⁴ Foxe hails Cromwell as an agent of Divine wrath and warmly applauds his radical policy toward the monasteries, 'whereupon, as often as he sent out any men to suppress any monastery, he used most commonly to send them with this charge: that they should throw down those houses even to the foundation' (Foxe, v. 377).

⁵ Plucked; probably from Latin *carpere*, and later used in connection with carding. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. carp, v 2.

⁶ Compare Dr. London on spoliation by the poor people of Warwick, '... butt yt is universally that the people be thus gredy for yren, wyndoes, doores and ledde' (H. Ellis, *op. cit.*, 3rd Ser., iii. 139).

before to allow their Religion, and do great Worship and Reverence at their Mattins, Masses and other Service, and all other their doings: which is a strange thing to way;¹ that they that could this day think it to be the House of God, and the next day the House of the Devil:² or else they would not have been so ready to have spoiled it.

But it is not a thing to be wondred at, by such Persons that well marketh the Inconstancy of the rude People, in whom a Man may graft a new Religion every day. Did not the same Jews worship Christ on Sunday, that had done to them much Good many ways, and cryed on Fryday next following, Crucify him?

For the better Proof of this my Saying, I demanded of my Father, thirty years after the Suppression, which had bought part of the Timber of the Church, and all the Timber in the Steeple, with the Bell Frame, with other his Parteners therein (in the which steeple hung viii, yea ix Bells; whereof the least but one, could not be bought at this Day for xx^{li}, which Bells I did see hang there myself, more than a year after the Suppression) whether he thought well of the Religious Persons and of the Religion then used? And he told me Yea: For said He, I did see no Cause to the contrary: Well, said I, then how came it to pass you was so ready to distroy and [21 (33)] spoil the thing that you thought well of? What should I do, said He: might I not as well as others have some Profit of the Spoil of the Abbey? For I did see all would away; and therefore I did as others did.

Thus you may see that as well they that thought well of the Religion then used, as they which thought otherwise, could agree well enough, and too well, to spoil them. Such a devil is Covetousness and Mammon! And such is the Providence of God to punish Sinners in making themselves Instruments to punish themselves, and all their Posterity, from Generation to Generation! For no doubt there hath been Millions of Millions that have repented the Thing since; but all too late. And thus much upon my own knowlege touching the Fall of the said Roche Abbey: which had stood about 300 years: For the Church was dedicated by one Ada, then Bishop of Coventry, in the year of our Lord God 1244.³ By the Fall

¹ *Sic*, presumably for weigh, i.e. consider.

² A palpable misinterpretation of the popular attitude, especially in view of the true story which Sherbrook now proceeds to tell.

³ An interesting tradition, partially supported by the surviving records. Though the existing building dates almost entirely from the previous century, the church was in fact dedicated about the date mentioned by Sherbrook. An undated charter of Idonea de Builli gives the Abbey her manor of Sandbeck *in dotem ad dedicationem ecclesiae suae de Rupe* and this charter can be dated 1241 by reference to that of Richard de Boyvill. See Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, v. 503-4. Like many other churches whose dedication had been long delayed, that of Roche probably received proper consecration as a result of the constitution issued by the cardinal legate Otho in 1237 (A. Hamilton Thompson, *Roche Abbey, Official Guide*, p. 4). I know nothing of any Adam, Bishop of Coventry, around this date.

whereof it may be well known how all the Rest were used.

Now you shall hear of the Fall of a College standing in Rotherham, within three Miles where I was born and now do dwell: for I learned at the School in the said Town, at the Freeschool, founded by the Founder of the said College, whose name was Scott, Archbishop then of York:¹ which is a fair House yet standing; but God knoweth how long it shall stand; for certain Brick Chimneys and other Brick Walls (for it is all made of Brick) is decayed and fallen down for lack of Use: for there hath been few Persons; and sometimes none at all of long time dwelling therein: because it is in the Earl of Shrewsbury his Hands;² and as the Report is, it is concealed Land;³ which seemeth to be the Cause that he maketh no more account thereof: and much less because all the Lands and Possessions are sold from it by the King; saving the Yard, Orchard, and Garden Places lying within the Walls thereof: for it is walled in with a Brick Wall.

The Foundation whereof was not to make a Malt House, as it is now used: but it was to this End and Purpose, that the Master thereof, should be a Preacher and to have three Fellows within it; of the which Fellows, one should teach freely a Grammar School within the Town for all that came to it: the second should teach freely a Writing School, and the third a Song School: and further to find vi Choiristers for the Maintenance of God's Service in the Church; untill their Voices changed; at which time they went to the Grammar School:⁴ For by the Foundation of Lincoln College in Oxford, whereof the said Bishop was a Founder also, the scholars that came from this College of Rotherham, were to be preferred to a Fellowship of that College, before any other:⁵ which was performed very well so long as the House stood, according to his first Foundation. But so soon as the said House was dissolved, neither Preacher nor Schoolmaster was provided: But the Town hired the

¹ On Archbishop Rotherham and his college, founded in 1483, see especially *Early Yorkshire Schools*, ii (*Y.A.S. Rec. Ser.*, xxxiii), pp. xxiii seqq.

² The site, with outhouses, stables, etc., but not the schoolhouse, was sold to Francis Earl of Shrewsbury in February 1549 at the rate of 22 years purchase (*ibid.*, pp. 185-6).

³ I.e. former Crown land to which the holder had only a defective title. Under Elizabeth and later, the commissioners appointed to compound with such holders extorted considerable sums, often with the aid of unscrupulous informers, who made a business of the search for defective titles (M. S. Giuseppi, *Guide to the Public Record Office*, i. 147).

⁴ On the three schools at Rotherham College, see *Early Yorks. Schools*, ii, pp. xxiii seqq., 172 seqq.

⁵ Archbishop Rotherham, the second founder of Lincoln College, supplied it in Feb. 1480 with a body of statutes confining some of the fellowships to natives of the diocese of Lincoln, with special local preferences, and others similarly to natives of the diocese of York. From the latter, four were to be chosen and two of these, if found fit, from Rotherham parish. Cf. J. Guest, *Historic Notices of Rotherham*, pp. 341-2.

Schoolmaster for the School many years after. Untill they made unto the Queens Majesty and obtained x^{li} yearly [21v (34)] towards the finding of the Schoolmaster for the Grammar School; which cost the Town not a little before they could get it.¹

Now let every one consider what great Loss this was to such a Town, and the Country round about it, not only for the Cause of Learning, but also for the Help of the Poor; that now in the Town is not a few: for these are many more than was then.

Therefore it did appear very well how the Commissioners meant to answer before God for the beneficial Assignment of Pensions for such Masters, Preachers, and Schoolmasters when they dissolved the House: it will be said, the Master then being Schoolmasters also lacked not their Pensions during their Lives: It may be true: but when they were dead, who should then pay the Preacher or Schoolmaster?² So it appeareth, whether the Foundation touched Superstition or sincere Religion; all was one: for all was Fish that came to the Nett. Well this College sped better than most of its Fellows, that were far better than it both in Building and Possessions. For they be for the most part rased down to the Ground, as the Monasteries for the most part are. For the richer House, and more costly and strongly builded the worse it sped and was dealt with all: for that thing that was done for the long Continuance of them in all such Buildings, was the Cause of their sooner Overthrow: For if they had been as barely builded as the first Religious Persons builded their Houses and Cells; and had had no greater Livings and Possessions belonging to them and no more Riches within them, they might have stood until this day: therefore this Saying is most true, *Religio est Mater Divitiarum, et Filia devorat Matrem*. And God suffereth both the Mother and Daughter to be destroyed.

If thou wilt know more of these Matters, read diligently the Estatutes made concerning Religion and the Things thereunto

¹ The certificate for the continuance of the grammar school is printed in *Early Yorks. Schools*, ii. 184-5. The master now received £10. 15s. 4d. as annual stipend from the Receiver of Crown revenues in Yorkshire. In 1561 he brought an action in the Exchequer demanding payment of arrears since 2 & 3 Philip and Mary: he obtained judgment for future payment, but no arrears. On this case and the revival of the grammar school in 1561, see the Exchequer decree printed in *ibid.*, pp. 187-190. This decree cost the town at least 20 marks (*ibid.*, 190-91).

² The stipends paid by the Crown were in fact continued after the death of the existing masters and paid to their successors. The 'catastrophic' views of A. F. Leach as to the effect of the Chantries Act upon the grammar schools have now been effectively attacked by Joan Simon in *British Journal of Educational Studies* iii, no. 2 and iv, no. 1. Moreover, the succeeding period saw numerous new foundations. In Yorkshire there were about 46 grammar schools in 1545; few of these disappeared, and 68 new ones appeared for the first time between 1545 and 1603 (I base these figures upon P. J. Wallis and W. E. Tate, *A Register of Old Yorks. Grammar Schools*, Leeds Institute of Education, *Researches and Studies*, no. 13).

pertaining in the Reign of King Henry 8 and King Edward 6, and thou shalt well perceive the fair Speeches there set down to be spoken to bring foul Acts to pass, for *Fistula dulce canit, volucrem dum decipit Auceps*, as is aforesaid.

Now that thou knowest what good Minds the Founders of Abbeyes, Colleges, and Chantries bare towards God and their Neighbours their Country People and what great Profit came thereby to the Country, according to the Founders good Mind and Meaning in the Building thereof; (although the Abbat and Covent and Masters of Colleges and their Fellows in many Places, yet not in all, did somewhat fly from their Founders Mind touching the observing of their own Rules and Profession) and likewise the Means and ways how they came to Ruin and Overthrow; and the order and Policy practised in the Suppression and Spoiling thereof.

Now it resteth to declare likewise what great Loss is come to the Commons of England by their Dissolution. For although by the Things beforesaid, the [22 (35)] greatest Loss is apparent. For the Profit and Commodity of the thing once declared, then to say the same thing is destroyed, must needs shew the Loss that cometh by the Destruction thereof, without any more words. For not the Lack of them is only so great an Hindrance to the Realm, as also the Doings or Practice of such Persons that are possessed of them, and the Lands and Livings that pertained to them, hath brought to the Realm sithence: for ever since the Dissolution of them the owners thereof hath continually and specially at this day doth devise and make the most of everything: which Abbats, Abbesses and such like never did: (For although some of them was worldly enough, yea more than enough, yet their Minds was set upon other things, as keeping the Rules of their Profession, although not so well as they should have done;) For now there be so many sorts of inferior Persons made Gentlemen, by reason of the Fall of the Monasteries, Colleges and such like, that the said Gentlemen to maintain their Estate and Calling; and not being contented to live according to the rate of their Revenues, as other antient gentlemen in times past did;¹ are compelled to raise their Rent so high that an acre of Ground, that might have been letten to farm before King Henry 8 times *iiii*^d will not be let now for *iii*^s². And if there be any Peice of wast Ground, wherein their Tenants and others have used to have Common for their Cattle; all is taken in, and so enclosed from all others, that the poor Cottagers, that always before might have kept a Cow for sustaining of himself, his wife and

¹ In fact, noblemen and gentlemen frequently accumulated heavy debts in the times of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Cf. e.g. the cases of Sir Francis Bigod and Lord Latimer in *Lollards and Protestants*, ch. iii, or again, the case of the sixth Earl of Northumberland in J. M. W. Bean, *The Estates of the Percy Family, 1416-1537*.

² If so, they were untypical examples.

Children and or xx^{ty} sheep towards their Cloathing, now is not able to keep so much as a Goose or a Hen; yea the Common arrable Feilds, that was common to all Persons dwelling within the Township (as well the Poor as the rich) are taken in and inclosed; and by reason thereof the Ground is worth so much that the poor cottagers, now innumerable (for in most Towns for every Cottage then is five now, and far more poor Persons in them: therefore to stay the building and making of Cottages is an Estatute made,¹ which helpeth not) and other poor Husbandman neither can have their Common therein, as they had before the Inclosure, no[r] is able to keep so much as a beast gate² within it, the Rent is so great: so that such Grounds is fit for no Persons but such as hath great Stock and Store of Money to buy Cattle, that is able to pasture it: for no Husbandman shall do good thereby by way of Tillage. Which thing hath brough[t] the Husbandmen to such Poverty that they are not able to maintein themselves, their Wives and Children, with very simple Fare and Apparel and pay their Landlords their Rents.

And through the taking in of such wast and common arrable Fields, the artificers dwelling in good Towns or uplandish Towns are not able to make [22v (36)] shift for so much as will keep a Cow, nor a Horse to carry their Wares to the Market: whereas before they were able to do both; by reason they might have put them upon the common waste ground, and common feilds.

Peradventure some Persons will say, if this be so great a Cause of Poverty, what sayest thou to those Shyres that have little or no wast grounds at all; but all their grounds are common arable Fields. Soothly I say touching these Feilds, that they be great Helps to poor Artificers and Cottagers and for³ better to poor Husbandmen so long as they lye open and unclosed: for the Occupation thereof is fit for no Persons but for Husbandmen, and therefore the Rent thereof cannot be so greatly inhaunced as the Rent of the inclosed grounds: and besides that thou wilt say there is many wast grounds that this day lieth forth: God forbid else: for it is a sore foughten feild where none escapeth: and an evil Country where no People of good Conscience and Charity dwelleth. But truly the Infection of Covetousness daily spreadeth further and further; still making the Poor more in Number: if God do not stint it by one means or other; as he knoweth best, and doth and suffereth all for the best; although it seem otherwise to Mens corrupted Judgment.

Besides all this there hath been such Sale of great Woods, which Abbeyes saved and nourished in every Country: whereas

¹ 31 Eliz. cap. 7 (1589) forbade the building of any cottage unless at least four acres of land were assigned to it.

² Northern dialect for pasture. Cf. *N.E.D.*, s.v. *beast* iv.

³ *Sic*.

sithence the Fall of Abbeyes no Man hath regarded them that must come after them, so they make a present Gain. Insomuch that Wood is come to such a Dearth, that a poor Husbandman is not able to buy Wood to maintain his Housing and his Husbandry geare; as Plows, Waynes, Carts, Harrows and such Like:¹ so that every thing still groweth a malo in pejus.

Here need not be any thing spoken of the Dearth² of all sorts of Cattle and such Stuff; that cometh by the reason of these dear Grounds and Woods; as Leather, Wool, Timber of all Sorts; and such things as are made of these three principal things by Mans' Art, to the Use of Man: And how can Corn be cheap, when all things that the Husbandmen standeth need of about his Tillage and getting thereof, is grown to such an excessive Price, by reason of the Cause aforesaid: And such more seeing they get not so much Corn now of two Acres, as they might lx years ago of one Acre: nor so much Hay: nor two Acres now will feed the Cattle, one Acre would have done them. But what the Cause hereof is, I can learn no other Cause of antient and old Tillmen but only the [23 (37)] Un-temperature of the Weather; for they say they never were better Husbands, and bestowed more Labour of the Ground, than they do at this Day.³

Therefore I take the principal Cause to be our Sins, that provoketh God's Anger against us, in sending such unseasonable Times and Weather, for the Cause expressed in Aggeus the Prophet Cap: 1. saying: Numquid Tempus Vobis est ut habitebis in Domibus vestris laqueatis, et Domus ista deserta?⁴ and so forth. Through which Plague none but the poor People are touched: but let the Rich take heed that they pledge them not, although not of the same Cup; yet perhaps of a worse that will grieve them more. God is just and hath no Respect of Persons.

And yet there is another Cause of this Poverty within this Realm, that peradventure is not perceived, but of a few: and if they do see if yet they wink at it: For the more People, the more Victuals are spent: and that cometh by the Suppression of the Abbeyes and Marriage of Priests: for there be far more People now than was in those Days; which may be well proved: for if an Estimation be made of all them that in those Days professed Chast-

¹ Shortage of wood became a common complaint around the mid-century, but I see no evidence to indicate that monasteries had been more economical or provident owners of woods than were laymen.

² I.e. actual dearth. Cf. Robert Parkyn who writes (*E.H.R.*, lxii. 73) of 'dearth without need', being mystified by the rise of prices (due basically to Peruvian silver) even when there was no famine.

³ Perhaps written during the near-famine period of the nineties and with a correct emphasis upon natural causes.

⁴ 'Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your cieled houses, while this house lieth waste' (Haggai, i. 4).

ity; yea and kept it to all mens Judgement;¹ it will appear what Number are encreased every year. Besides the small Portions that married Ministers may spare towards the Help of the Poor, for providing for their Wives and Children: For it appeareth by Polychronicon, there was in England at the Conquest 40005 Parish Churches as is beforesaid:² (and sayeth he writing about Edward 3 times, there be many more now, and sheweth the Cause why) But since the Suppression of Religious Houses, I am assured that diverse Churches in sundry Places, are pulled down by Reason of Unions made of some Parishes before mentioned, but yet there be as many as were at the Conquest: seeing every Minister for the most part is married, and many of those married Ministers hath some iiii or v Children, some more and some less, and so one with another, allow to every Minister ii Children, then must needs be 80 000 Persons more encreased in every fourth year through the whole Realm: which 80 000 Persons being provided out of the Portion for the Poor; what will be left for them, think you?³

And specially out of the Vicars Portion whose Parsonages [23v (38)] are in the Temporal Mens Hands, that thinketh they are no more bound in Conscience to give any more to the Poor, by Reason of their Tenths and Oblations, than any other Layman is out of his Temporal Lands: seeing such Parsonages are made Lay Fee in all respects by the Law of the Land.

As for the married Bishops and Ministers that have any great Parsonages, as Deans, Archdeacons and other Prebendaries in Cathedral Churches, what they may spare it is evident to all People; by that time they have brought up their Children, Gentleman like, at Learning or otherwise; yea some Nobleman like; and married their Daughters accordingly; and purchased great Possessions for their Sons;⁴ and bestowed such Rewards about to such Persons, as hath been a Mean to bring them to their Benefices; to whom perhaps they are bound by Promise. And something their wives must have to live by when their Husbands hath taken their Journey, as they say, either towards God or the Devil: for there is no abiding Place

¹ In fact, the celibate priesthood had a bad reputation in this respect during the decades preceding the dissolution. The problem as to whether they deserved it is another matter: cf. e.g. H. Maynard Smith, *Pre-Reformation England*, pp. 45-53.

² Cf. *supra*, pp. 35-6.

³ The basic estimate of 40,000 parish clergy being four times as great as the actual number, this estimate becomes worthless, irrespective of other doubtful data.

⁴ Sherbrook probably had in mind two archbishops under whom he had served: Thomas Young and Edwin Sandys. Both were notoriously ambitious to turn their offspring into county families, the latter at Worcester as well as at York. For relevant particulars concerning these and other Elizabethan bishops, see A. L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth*, pp. 177-8, 407 *seqq.*

in the mid way; no not so much as to stay to drink a Cup of cold water to quench their burning Thirst.¹

Now if all this be true; the Proof whereof I refer not to any old Evidence; but only to the Witness of this our time; that is able to give in Evidence *vivâ voce*; and to their own Judgement that seeith it, as well as others, by the experience of these xxx^{ty} years at the least.

And besides all the said Religious Persons, which far passed the Number of the Secular Priests,² there were many more, yea thousands, as Ancrers,³ both men and women; and widdows that had taken the mantle and Ring; Chantry Priests; whereof in most Churches, were one or two; yea, I dare say, take one with another, in every Church one:⁴ Besides many serving Priests that was Noblemens Chaplains; and others that said Service in many gentlemen Houses that had Oratories or Chapels within their House; and Priests that did sing for the Dead, saying Trentals⁵ and Diriges, and such Service; which had no other Living, but their Service in such order. And Priests that served Free-chapels and chapels at ease,⁶ and such other Chapels; whereof there are few or none standing at this Day.

All which Persons vowed Chastity, and kept it to all mens Judgement; for then a Mass was worth but *iiii*^d or *vi*^d at the most; and there-[24 (39)]-fore they were plenty: But now they be at 100 Marks a peice; beside further Pennance:⁷ and therefore the priest cannot be set on Work, which maketh many go secretly a begging; and will sooner cover his Head with a Cow-turd, according to the old Prophecy, than show his shaven Crown.

Now let the whole Sum of all the said People that lived chaste be cast, and set so many at Liberty to marry and get Children, and

¹ A reference to the 'abolition' of Purgatory.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 100, n. 3.

³ Recluses, a number of whom survived in the reign of Henry VIII, especially ancesses. As late as 1531 the Abbot of Leiston resigned to be consecrated as an anchorite in the long-abandoned abbey-building by the sea-shore (*Chron. Butley Priory*, p. 59).

⁴ An overestimate. The average per parish was high in Yorkshire, where there were some 405 chantries (*Surtees Soc.*, xcii. 370), but not many more than 300 chantry-priests in over 600 parishes.

⁵ Trental: a series of thirty requiem masses usually said over thirty days, but at this period sometimes in as little as one day (*Testamenta Eboracensia*, v. 320).

⁶ Such chapels were of exceptional importance in the vast parishes of the Pennine area and many were spared even by the Edwardian spoilers. Free chapels were those exempted from episcopal jurisdiction, yet the two terms are used somewhat loosely in the Tudor period.

⁷ A jocular reference to the penal statute 23 Eliz. cap. 1 (1581), which ordered *inter alia*, 'that every person which shall willingly hear mass shall forfeit the sum of one hundred marks and suffer imprisonment for a year'.

tell me then what Number of Children you think will be got every year? What was the Cause that so many thousands have gone forth of their Country, where they were born, to seek Habitations in other Countries, to the great Danger of themselves and others, but the great number of People increased in the said Countrey which fled out of their own Countries? Even as the Bees when they are so increased within their Hives, that they can abide no longer altogether, are compelled to swarm forth, and to seek their Habitation in other Places, where they can find it.

Therefore it is not without great Cause that our Forefathers have set down such strait Rules, both touching Chastity and Marriage, wherein they allowed but one woman to be coupled to a Man.

Thus much touching the Commodity of Chastity for the Common Weale; although it be not to be esteemed for Religion or God's Cause: and yet the learned Divines sayeth, it is the Ground of all other Virtues.

Now let us see what Commodity cometh of Fasting to the Common Wealth; which was great in those Days and greatly practised among all People of Discretion, very sick Persons only excepted, whom very little Meat did serve; and specially among Religious Persons and Priests, and all other the said Persons; for whatsoever professed Chastity, the same gave himself to great Fasting also; because it is a Mean to keep Chastity.

And therefore the Religious Persons fasted every week, Wednesday, Fryday and Saturday, and all Advent, before Christmas, to a meal a day; which is by the space of 3 weeks: and they did likewise fast all Lent; which is the space of seven weeks. Now it must needs follow, that by the Abstinence of all the said Persons, that [24v (40)] a great deal of Flesh was saved that is spent now by the most part of the Clergy Men and their Children that come of them: Besides that which is spent by thousands of thousands that will keep very hardly any one day in the fasting times; notwithstanding all the Estatutes made for Fasting and Abstinence from Flesh.¹ And therefore through the Liberty given to break all these fasting days, making Fasting a superstitious Ceremony, or any other Act whereby no Conscience is made thereof, the Estatute Law will not prevail: for all Things and in all Persons where no Conscience is made and had, no Human Law will help.

Therefore let all Governors of Common Wealths take Heed for giving too much Liberty in Matters of Religion, which is best

¹ Several statutes (e.g. 2 & 3 Edward VI cap. 19; 5 Eliz. cap 5, sections xiv, xxxix) imposed penalties in order to enforce or regulate fish-eating on certain fish-days during the week, on Ember Days and during Lent. The objects of the Elizabethan legislation were not religious, but to help the fishing industry, safeguard the navy and spare flesh-victuals.

kept with Austerity of Life; if godly Mens sayings and Doings be of any Force, to the Common People: for they be such a sturdy and unruly Creatures, that if they cast the Bridle once forth of their Mouths, it is hard to bridle them again even as it is hard to stop a Water that hath once got his Course at large.

For as the said Fasting and Abstinence, not only from Flesh, but also by many thousands of thousands, from all white meats; as Butter, Cheese, Eggs, Milk, both of Frydays weekly, and all the Time of Lent; then of great Estimation with all godly Persons; although in our time railed of and called Jack of Lent in Rhime and Plays, as many other Things touching Religion, have been, not of a few, to the Grief of all good Men. And in some Houses of Religion, they did never eat any thing but Fish.¹

All which Abstinence was a great saving of white Meat, of Flesh meat and other like Meat; whereby there was great Plenty thereof at other times of the year, when it was to be eaten. For then one might have bought xx Eggs for a Penny;² and Butter, Cheese, and such Like accordingly. Yea then all young calves and Lambs and such like, was saved to the Great Profit of the Common Weale.

Then might the Poor have lived well, that now is ready to pine for Hunger, because Victual is so dear and Money to them so ill to come by.³ And by the same Means was Fish great cheap; [25 (41)] because so much was eaten; and therefore could be uttered and sold when it was gotten: which made many thousands to apply the Sees and other fresh Waters; which doth not abound with Fish at this day, as they did then; (by the Fishers report). And because the Like Quantity cannot now be sold, the People by the Sea Coast and other Places, have laid away the Trade of Fishing: whereupon the Fish is far dearer than it was: And Mariners and seamen far fewer: which are very necessary People in time of Peace and in time of war; for the encountering of the Enemies upon the Seas in War; and to scour the Seas of Rovers in time of Peace. For the Redress whereof there is an Estatute made; little to the Purpose, as Experience proveth.

And yet there is much more Hindrance come to the Realm of England by the Fall of Religious Houses, and the Alteration of Religion, than is here expressed, that will be evident to the Reader

¹ In particular, the Carthusian Order.

² This price was common in the 15th century and even, in some years, as late as c.1520. By 1527-1535 the 'long hundred' (i.e. 120 eggs) sometimes cost 1/6 or 2/-. After the dearth of the fifties, which saw violent fluctuations and occasionally famine-prices, the first two decades of Elizabeth generally saw prices well in excess of 2/- the long hundred. Though farm-prices in general rose steeply around the mid-century, the case of this commodity was unparalleled. Cf. J. E. T. Rogers, *Hist. of Agriculture and Prices*, iii. 209-18; iv. 357-8.

³ For a general account of the prices of farm produce, 1401-1582, see *ibid.*, iv, ch. xii.

of the History of Times, and the Laws and Estatutes of this Realm, if they be well pondered; and the Times past, and the Time present compared together, touching the State of the Realm aforesaid. And specially concerning the poor People, (notwithstanding all the Laws made against their Begging, and for the Provision of them within the several Parishes and Towns where they dwell). For there be for one Beggar in the 1st year of King Henry 8 at this day in the 33 year of her Majestie an Hundred.¹ As may partly be gathered by the multitude of Beggars, that came to the Funeral of George, late Earl of Shrewsbury, celebrated at Sheffield in Yorkshire the 13 Day of January in the said 33 year. For there were by the Report of such as served the Dole unto them, the Number of 8 thousand: and they thought that there were almost as many more, that could not be served, through their Unruliness; yea the Press was so great that diverse were slain and many hurt. And further it is reported of credible Persons, that well estimated the Number of all the said Beggars, that they thought there was about twenty thousand.²

Now judge you what a Number of poor People is to be thought to be within the whole Realm: seeing so many appeareth to be in one small part of a Country or Shire: for it is thought by great Conjecture, that all the said poor People were abyding and dwelling within 30 miles Compass of Sheffeld aforesaid: And yet were there [25v (42)] many more that came not to the Dole.

And more is like to come and follow, specially if the Puritans and other sectaries may have their Minds fulfilled finding as many faults with the Bishops and others of the Clergy at this day, for their Habits and other Popish Ceremonies as they term them, as the Protestants found with the Papists in times past. And therefore, as it is commonly reported, have preferred into the Parliament House a Bill against the Bishops and Bishopricks now in England, as the Lollards did in Henry 4 time against the Clergy, showing how necessary a thing, and how consonant to God's word it is to take all the Temporalities from the Bishops:³ To the end to dissolve

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 31. The year 33 Eliz. ended 16 November 1591.

² George, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, died at the Manor, Sheffield, 18 November 1590. The funeral took place 13 January 1591 (not 10 January, as stated by Hunter) and was more sumptuous than any hitherto seen in those parts. 'The assembly to see the same', states another contemporary, 'was marvellous, both of nobility, gentry and countryfolk, and poor folks without number' (J. Hunter, *Hallamshire*, ed. A. Gatty, pp. 97-8). The burgesses' accounts show a payment of eight shillings 'to the Coronerye for the fee of iij persons that were slayne with the fall of ij Trees that were burned downe at my Lordes funerall the xijth of Januarye 1590[-91]' (*Records of the Burgery of Sheffield*, ed. J. D. Leader, p. 60).

³ Probably a reference to the draft bill, now in the statepapers, proposing to suppress all collegiate and cathedral churches. Cf. *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1581-1590, p. 578, ccxxii, no. 70(ii) and the report concerning it in *ibid.*, *Addenda*, 1580-1625, p. 273, xxxi, 32, no. 14. This bill does not appear to have been introduced into either house; shortly after its drafting, Parliament was dissolved (March 1589) and did not reassemble until February 1593.

the Bishopricks quite, as the Bishoprick of Durham was in King Edward 6 time, and so continued untill 1 Mary, wherein it was erected again and all things restored:¹ and sheweth further how many Preachers may be maintained thereby, putting the Bishops to their Pensions: and further sheweth in their Bill, how that the Service now used in the Church of England is Superstition, and against God's word: and would have another Service set forth after their device; which should consist for the most part in Preaching; and no prescribed Prayers; but such Prayers and Ceremonies as should please the Ministers to say; as Time and Place should require. And many other such like unprofitable Devices; hurtful to the Common Weale; as it may well appear in their Books in Print, being in many Persons' hands; and specially of such, (which be many thousands) as favoureth their Opinions: although the having of them be prohibited by Proclamation. For when they did see that they could not be heard when they wrote grave Matters; then they fell to Rayling, scoffing and taunting the Bishops and other Protestants of the Clergy, which now are set on work and doth answer them in like rayling, scoffing and taunting; as it appeareth by Mr. Martyn Marprelate Gentleman;² and Have y'any Work for the Cooper;³ Poppe with an Hatchet;⁴ an Almond for a Parrot;⁵ Plain Percyvall, the Peace Maker of England,⁶ and such Like.

And so that Papists are become somewhat the more quiet thereby and beholdeth both their Follies and laugheth them to Scorn, as well they may do: For as the Protestants were raised up, by the Sufferance of God [26 (43)] out and from the Papists, to their overthrow here in England with all Contempt for their Sins: Even so hath the Puritans risen from amongst the Protestants to their Overthrow;⁷ if God permit the Puritans to have as good Success against them, as the Protestants had against the Papists: and in the end to their own Overthrow, and the utter undoing of

¹ Bishop Tunstall was deprived in October 1552 and an Act (7 Edward VI cap. 12) passed in March 1553 to divide the diocese in two. After much opposition, the see was restored to Tunstall in April 1554. Cf. C. Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall*, pp. 291-9.

² These are all pamphlets of the Marprelate controversy, issued in 1589-90.

³ Printed at Coventry in March 1589; the fourth Marprelate tract, and attributed to Penry.

⁴ *Pappe with a hatchet* (1589), by John Lyly; an anti-Martinist tract. Cf. W. Pierce, *Hist. Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts*, pp. 228-9.

⁵ *An almond for a parrat, or Cuthbert Curry-Knaves almes*; attributed to Thomas Nash; another anti-Martinist tract, probably published early in 1590. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 236-9.

⁶ Attributed to Richard Harvey (1590); this was a mediating tract, urging reconciliation between the Puritans and the bishops. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 231-3.

⁷ Catholic writers of the period sometimes maintain this antithesis between Protestants (i.e. Anglicans) and Puritans. Cf. e.g. *Cal. State Papers Domestic, Addenda 1580-1625*, p. 273.

the Common Weale of England; if God of his free Mercy be not merciful to it.

For that Realm can never be well governed that is ruled by the Advice of such raw Heads, most unconstant and ignorant in the Rules of all good Government.

For although the Restitution of all Parsonages inappropriate, would no doubt be a great Help to the poor Commons, if good Parsons were placed in them without Wives and Children; yet the Fall of the Bishoprics, which the Puritans would have, would be no small Hindrance, both to Learning and the poor People.

But the Puritans respect not either of these two Points; but this one point; that such seditious People as themselves, now belacking Living through their Heresy, might be placed in those Benefices, under the Name of Preachers; to sow more corrupt Seed among the People; to both their Overthrows in the End.

Now when King Henry 8 the Scourge of the Spirituality, was dead; whose Life, whether it was more godly and Devout, or he more wise and better governor, then such other his Predecessors, Kings and Queens of England before him, as builded and maintained the said Religious Houses untill his Time; and whether he left behind him greater Treasure to his Successor, his Son King Edward 6, than the former Kings and Queens did to their Successors; as specially King Henry 2, that reigned 35 years and had great wars; and yet never put upon his subjects any Tribute or Tax, neither upon the Spirituality or Temporality;¹ nor had any first Fruits nor Appropriations of Benefices, (belike they were not known or else not used) and yet his Treasure after his Death, weighed by King Richard his Son, amounted to above 900 000^{li} besides Jewells, precious Stones and Household Furniture etc: Or Henry 7 his Father did to him, for all the Spoil he had by the Religious Houses and other Profits had [26v (44)] from the Clergy? Or whether that his Subjects of the Realm was any whit more disburthened of Subsidies, Taxes or other Impositions by reason thereof, it doth well appear by Chronicles and Estatutes of his Time.

For it seemeth to the Contrary for 3 Reasons. First, for that the Subsidies and Taxes granted hath been as many sithence the Fall of the Abbeyes as before their Fall: besides Loans of Money that were never repayed; but quite released by Parliament.²

¹ This somewhat startling tradition concerning the fiscal moderation of Henry II derived from William of Newburgh and John of Salisbury. Needless to say, Ralph Niger and others took a diametrically opposite line. Cf. Stubbs, *Constitutional Hist.*, i. 530-32. On the rich treasure left by Henry II, see the references in *ibid.*, p. 534.

² In 1529 Parliament released the King from his debts without qualification; in 1544 it absolved him from repaying loans as from 1 January 1542 (J. D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors*, p. 439; cf. 21 Hen. VIII, Private Acts, cap. 3; 35 Hen. VIII cap. 12).

Secondarily, the Building of the Block Houses by the Sea Coast; that could not be builded without the Aid of the Commons.¹

And thirdly, the sudden Suppression of Colleges, Chantrys, etc: which need no[t] so soon to have been spoiled, if the late king had left great Treasure thereof behind him. And no Marvell: for Male parta pejus dilabuntur.²

Therefore read Hall his Chronicle, and thou shalt see how all the Spoil of the Abbeyes and Religious Houses was spent as in Banquettings and such like.³ For after his Death came Sweepstakes⁴ and his Fellows, and fetched all that was left quite away; that was, Colleges, Chapels, Chanterys, Guilds, Fraternities, Obiits, Hospitals, Spittals, and all things whereby Profit was to be had; as it appeareth by the Estatute made Anno 1. Edward 6 Cap xiiii. In the making of which Estatute, the Parliament Men had better Consideration than was had in the Estatute that had given them before to King Henry 8. For now was reserved and excepted the Colleges in the Universities and two or three other for Learning Sake.⁵

But the poor Lazars Houses, I mean the Hospitals, was not spoken of or reserved: so mindfull was the Full-Belly, of the hungry and needfull Christian Brethren! Yet who dare say but the Parliament House hath always God before their Eyes.

In old time the Parliament began with a Mass of the Holy Ghost; but now with a Mass of the Holy Flesh: For at this Time they abolished Masses, Mattins, Evensong and all that old was; and took all the Howsehold Stuff away; insomuch that the Church, which was the richest House in the Parish, is become the poorest; as it is evident by the Esta-[27 (45)]-tute made in 4 Edward 6 Ca: 1 and in 5 and 6 Edward 6 Ca: 5 and in the 3 and 4 Edward 6. Cap: 10.⁶ Under Colour of the which Estatutes, the Candlesticks, Crosses, Censures, Crewetts, Holy Water Fatts, Lettornes, Bells, Copes, Vestments, and what not, as well as the Books and Images was taken away; and the Parishioners, in many Churches, had no Recompence for them; although by the Estatute, nothing was to be utterly destroyed but Images and Books. Yea when the Commissioners did turn this Estatute to their own Commodity; having

¹ From 1537 many blockhouses and other coastal fortifications were erected. Sherbrook perhaps derived his point from 32 Hen. VIII cap. 50.

² 'Male parta, male dilabuntur', quoted by Cicero, *Philippics*, ii. 27, 65.

³ Hall's *Chronicle* does in fact devote much space to court festivities, but cf. *supra*, p. 34.

⁴ One who sweeps up the whole of the stakes in a game; figurative for one who grabs everything. Fr. Holtby so uses the term in 1593 (J. Morris, *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*, iii. 163).

⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 120. 1 Edward VI cap. 14, section xix exempted Oxford and Cambridge colleges, Eton, Winchester and certain other foundations.

⁶ The references to the first two statutes have apparently been mistranscribed, the first probably for 1 Edward VI cap. 14, the Chantries Act. The third is correctly given, being the Act abolishing superstitious books and images.

a godly Scope, by the Colour of those words Superstition and Idolatry, they thought good for their own Profit, to make the ignorant Church-Wardens and such other like of the Parishioners, that was afraid to speak any word against their doing, contrary to the Law, (least they should have been taken up for Hawk's meat as all Papists were) to beleive, that the Parishioners must needs make all things away with speed. But yet some Church Wardens, wiser than other some, sold many things to the Use of the Parish: yea that thing for 1^d which cost xii^d (as I myself can witness that bought part of the Church Goods;) and many other Persons there were then of the like Consciences and Condictions to the Commissioners: which Persons took many things away without Commissions, seeing all things were put to the Spoil. For they plucked up the Brass of Tombs and Gravestones in the Church; contrary to the very Words of the Estatute. And some stole the Bells forth of the Steeple; as one Gentleman, whose name was Boseville, dwelling then at Tyckell-Castle (a very Shyfter, I will not say a Theif, and sithence made a Minister) stole the great Bell forth of the steeple in St. Johnes¹ and carried it away in the Night.²

But now the Churches are more like to fall down for default of upholding, than to be robbed of their Wealth in Stuff. For there is nothing in the Church to be had, used and maintained, but the Communion Book, the Bible and the Homily Book; with two Surplices; the one for the Minister and the other for the Clark; and a Communion Cup instead of a Chalice; and in the Place of the Altar, one Communion Table; less revered and far worse kept, than any Person of Countenance keepeth his own Common Dining Table; and a Fount Stone with Water [27v (46)] made of no more account, yea not so much, as a mean Gentleman maketh the Bason wherein he washeth his Hands. And yet is not the Parishioners willing to maintain these few things, with the Church and Bells therein: But in many Places letteth the Church go down: yea specially the Chancel, where the Parsonage is taken from it by Impropriation.³

¹ I.e. St. John's at Laughton-en-le-Morthen.

² Thomas Bosvill was ordained priest in 1564, instituted to the vicarage of Penistone 1570 and died 1574. In the reign of Edward VI he was deputy steward of Tickhill Honor, part of the Duchy of Lancaster, and as such brought a case against others for detention of church plate (J. Hunter, *South Yorkshire*, ii. 345; *Ducatus Lancastriae, Calendar to the Pleadings*, i. 262). While it is possible that he was handling this bell in his official capacity, he may well have deserved Sherbrook's strictures. The Yorkshire chantry surveys show a Thomas Boswell or Bosville of Stainton as entering about 1537 upon a messuage and lands of the chantry at Tickhill (*Surtees Soc.*, xci. 170); this man was presumably the same.

³ Elizabethan visitational and other records support this charge against parishioners and, much more pointedly, against farmers of rectories responsible for the upkeep of chancels. Cf. J. S. Purvis, *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York*, pp. 180-89.

Whereby it may easily be judged that either great Poverty or small Devotion toward God is the Cause hereof: which is also the Cause of making Estatutes for the Coming to the Church; for Fasting; for the Poor; for the amending of High Ways; for Payment of Tythes, and such like.

Thus betwixt making and marring during King Edward's time, they took the Spoil of that, which King Henry could not take, for shortness of Life. And when they had done with spoiling of Churches; then they fell out among themselves about temporal affairs, minding to spoil the King, and all; untill such time as the said spoilers had brought one anothers Heads under the Axe: For the Lord Protector Duke of Somerset, called Edward Seymour, was the great Doer hereof, with the Help of the Bishop Cranmer, the Bishop of Canterbury, the second Pope in England.

And thus while they were at Broil among themselves, (their Shaddow) King Edward died; whose Death as the Report goeth, they hastened;¹ and well it appeared so by the Sequell of the Matter: For the Duke of Northumberland, called John Dudley, and Henry the Duke of Suffolk, had married their children together, intending thereby to have come to the Crown: for they caused the Duke of Suffolk's Daughter, called Jane, to be proclaimed Queen, which was then married to the Duke of Northumberland's Son, called Gilford Dudley; grounding their Proclamation of the Estatute made in the 28 of Henry 8. Cap: 7.²

But God that will never suffer Sin unpunished, and virtue unrewarded, overthrew their Advice, brought both their Heads to the Axe, and the new Queen with her Husband also: and set Queen Mary in her own Inheritance, contrary to all Mens Expectation. For the very Commons, contrary to the Minds of all the Nobility, brought her to the Crown without any Bloodshed: although the Duke of Northumberland went against her with the Queen's Power that then was proclaimed; and others of the Nobility kept the Tower to Queen Jane's Use.

[28 (47)] So wonderfull is Gods work touching the setting up of Princes. And thus the Prophecy of the Holy Maid of Kent, Elizabeth Barton, was fulfilled;³ that said, that Lady Mary, the

¹ As with several other eminent Tudor figures, including Wolsey, *supra*, p. 105, popular rumour was quick to allege poisoning. Regarding Edward VI, see J. A. Froude, *Hist. Eng.* v. 172 and Robert Parkyn in *E.H.R.*, lxii. 77.

² The Succession Act of 1536, allowing the King to dispose of the Crown by his will or letters patent. Northumberland prevailed upon the young King to assert the same privilege.

³ Probably derived from Hall's account of the treasonable prophecies of the Nun of Kent, 'that the sayd lady Katherin should prospere and do wel, and that her issue the lady Mary . . . should prosper and reygne in this realme and have many frendes to sustaine and maintayne her (Hall, *Chron.*, ed. C. Whibley, ii. 257).

King's Daughter should prosper and reign in this Realm, and have many Friends to sustain and maintain her.

Which Queen Mary was as earnest a Papist as they in her Fathers and Brothers time before, were earnest Protestants: And therefore she brought in the Pope again: and whereas the Subjects did take oaths at diverse times against the Pope; now they did swear on his side again. So the Oaths were made as a Noose of Wax, fit for either way; that is to and fro, as it pleased the Princes and their Commons in the Parliament.

And now all the Laws made in King Henry 8 and King Edward 6 time against the Pope and the Church are repealed: provided always that the Clergy should have no Restitution, either of Lands or Goods, that the Laity had given them from them through Alteration of Religion; But that the Laity might quietly enjoy the same.¹

And there was never so great hanging, drawing and quartering for Religion in time of King Henry 8 and King Edward 6 but there was as great burning for Religion in this Queen Maries time: For now Cranmer the Archbishop that had ruled all the Rost, was roasted himself, with diverse other Bishops with their Ministers, and many a Lay Subject, both Men and Women.

And whereas the poor Commons had taken from them their Church Goods in King Edward's time, as is aforesaid: now in this Queens time, they were compelled to buy new again, and thus God on the Altar put the Commons to no little Charges by his going away and his coming again. But such as was of the Parliament House ready to take him by the Hand at his Departure and bid him farewell, were as ready when he came again to shake him by the Fist and say he was Welcome. And so such ever turned but never burned: For none died for God on the Altar as the Papists termeth him, where the Protestants called him the Idol of the Halter; as it appeareth by the Estatute made 4 Edward 6 Ca: 7 against such Blasphemy;² But they that know not what Subtilty is used in Religion, and cannot decerne true Religion or rather Superstition and Heresy: And yet there were of the learned Sort on both sides that died for the same.

[28v (48)] And thus whilst some of the Subjects turned, and other some burned, Queen Mary died, and Queen Elizabeth succeeded and repealed all the Estatutes made in Queen Mary's time, touching Religion: and had the same Religion that was in King Edward's time.

Then God of the Altar swept his House clean and went his way again: and now if he chance to peep in at the Wickett, (for he dare not openly shew his Face) he that saluteth him with any

¹ By 1 & 2 Philip and Mary cap. 8; cf. *supra*, p. 122, n. 2.

² Another mistranscription: in this case obviously for 1 Edward VI cap. 1.

Salutation, be it never so small, it will cost him an 100 Marks, by the Estatute made in 23 Elizabeth Ca: 1.¹

Therefore there is none but his very Friends that will salute him. And here I cease to speak any more of the Alteration of Religion, Suppression of Religious Houses, Churches, Chantries, Chapels, Colleges, Hospitals, the Overthrow of the Clergy and the Sequel thereof, hitherto which hath been wondrous to all People, gainfull to many, and hurtfull to the most Part: and hereafter will be more marvellous and dangerous to all such as shall live to behold the same: to whom I commit the Declaration thereof to remayne to their Posterities as an addition to this former Part, a lamentable Hearing to all good People, and a Spectacle to all evill that hereof have heard or read.

Now that you have heard for what Cause Religious Houses were builded and maintained, and also of Wealth they came unto² in the End; and likewise of the Qualities and usage of the Owners of them and what Commodity the standing and maintaining of them brought to the Common Weale of England; and the Cause of their Ruin, and the Ways and Means to their Ruin; and of the Order and Policy in destroying of them; and what great Discommodity is come to the Common Weale after their Destruction, by the Owners of their Lands and Houses; and to what End the Wealth that came to the King by their Overthrow came unto; and, as it was by the way, how well the Principal Causers of their Destruction and their Generation hath prospered since, and is like to do; as Cardinal Wolsey; Cromwell; Edward 6; the Seymours; (Queen Mary, who although she was zealous in Religion, yet her Prosperity was small;) The Duke of [29 (49)] Northumberland; whose Name is now worn out;³ and diverse others mentioned in the Chronicles of that time, if thou consider thereof well.

Therefore I would wish all good People to take Example by them to eschew the evill Deeds of them, and all such as seeketh more their private Commodity and carnal Affection, than the Common Weale or God's Service; To whom be all Praise.

FINIS

"Begun to transcribe this MS. on St. Nicholas his Day, the Patron of
"our College,⁴ viz: Dec: 6 and finish'd it December the 10. 1745.
"I have not observed the old spelling of the Original, though I have
"the Language of that time, which is false English throwout according
"to our present Speech: and I have also divided it into Parag aphs."

W^m Cole.

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 132, n. 8.

² *Sic.*

³ All Northumberland's eight sons died without legitimate offspring (G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ix. 726, n. (c)).

⁴ St. Nicholas of Myra, patron of King's College Cambridge, to which Cole had migrated in 1735.

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